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KABIR
AND
THE KABIR PANTH

BY

G. H. WESTCOTT

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Century A.D.	*Hindu*	*Christian*
1100	Ramanuja 1090-1150 (?)	
1200		
1300	Ramanand 1300-1400 (?)	Wyckliffe 1324-84 Jordanus 1321
1400	Gorakh Nath 1420-1485 (?)	Erasmus 1467-1536
	Kabir 1440-1518	Luther 1483-1546
	Nanak 1469-1538	Cranmer 1489-1555
	Chaitanya 1486-1527	
1500	Vallabha Swami 1520	Fr. Xavier 1506-52
	Dadu 1544-1603	J. Xavier goes to Lahore 1596
	Tulsi Dass 1544-1624	

Sankaracharya was born in 788 and died in 828.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

The following pages represent the result of inquiries extending over the last ten years.* The gradual way in which such information, as is given, has been acquired and the number of times that first impressions have had to give way to subsequent discoveries would be sufficient warning that this representation of the subject is little likely to be free from errors. My hope is that this study will do something to increase the interest already felt by many in the various religious sects that have been called into existence in India through the efforts of distinguished teachers.

I have tried to avoid dogmatising on questions that call for fuller investigation; but we have at any rate in the teaching of Kabir an attempt to break down the barriers that separate Hindus from Muhammadans, and we have probably in the Kabir Panth a religious system that owes something to Hindu, Muhammadan and Christian influences.

If Christ had been an Indian, would not his Gospel have been welcomed by many who now refuse to listen?

For help in this undertaking I am principally indebted to my Mali, Badlu Dass, who is himself a member of the Panth. He has visited all places of interest in connexion with the Panth, has introduced me to many Mahants and conducted inquiries with great intelligence. The Rev. Ahmad Shah, who is now engaged in bringing out an edition of the *Bijak*, has made many valuable suggestions and has also superintended the copying of various Kabir Panthi MSS. U. R. Clement and the Rev. Prem Chand have also rendered valuable assistance, while the Rev. B. H. P. Fisher of this Mission has kindly seen these pages through the Press.

G. H. WESTCOTT

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* The first edition of this book was published from the Christ Church Mission Press, Kanpur, in the year 1907

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This volume is a reprint, with a few additions here and there, of Bishop G. H. Westcott's well-known work on the greatest lyric poet and mystic, Kabir, (1380—1420)* who flourished in Mediæval India.

Kabir is the Indian Luther of the 15th century who may rightly be regarded as the creator of sacred literature in Hindi. He and his successors endeavoured to combine the strict monotheism of Islam with its abhorance of idolatory with whatever was best and most deeply rooted in the creed of Hinduism. Like Raja Rammohan Roy he had attempted to form a composite creed out of the best elements of Hinduism and Islam. He based his teachings on the monotheism of the *Upanishads*. He was a great singer, and *avadhut*, an advocate of *Advaitavad* who "places the Law of the Universe in the heart of man as his higher self, where alone the soul can discover him."

The following pages give a vivid per-picture of this mystic, his teachings, his *Sadhana* and his followers.

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* Sir W. W. Hunter in "Indian Empire," 1892. Dr. Hari Prasad Shastri (See "Great Men of India," Home Library Club, Bombay) puts the date as 1398—1518.

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF KABIR

It is generally allowed that of all the great Hindu Reformers Kabir and Tulsi Dass have had the greatest influence for good among the uneducated classes of Northern and Central India. Kabir has been fittingly described by W. W. Hunter as the Indian Luther of the 15th century.

Among those who acknowledge their indebtedness to Kabir as a spiritual guide are Nanak Shah of the Panjub, the founder of the Sikh community; Dadu of Ahmedabad (1544)[1], the founder of the Panth that bears his name, and Jag Jiwan Dass of Oudh (1760), the founder of the Sat Nami sect. Among religious teachers whose doctrine is said to be based upon the teaching of Kabir are Bribhan, the founder of the Sadh community (1658), Baba Lal of Malwa and Shiva Narain of Ghazipur.

Of these Nanak Shah is the teacher with whose name the English reader is most familiar, and it is therefore well in his case to enlarge somewhat upon a bold assertion of indebtedness.

In the JANAM SAKHI[2] Kabir is mentioned as a Bhagat equal in merit to Nanak himself, and other Bhagats are exhorted to follow his example. On more than one occasion Nanak quotes with emphasised approval verses attributed to Kabir.

The ADI GRANTH[3], the sacred book of the Sikhs, gives much information concerning the life of Kabir and the character of his teaching. The interest which Nanak felt in Kabir was probably enhanced by the fact that he had enjoyed personal intercourse with the reformer.[4]

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[1] All the dates given in the text refer to the year Anno Domini.

[2] Janam Sakhi (Evidence or Story of birth) is the name given to the accounts of Nanak, current among his followers. A translation of two such accounts will be found in Trumpp's edition of the Adi Granth.

[3] *Adi* first, principal. *Granth* book. The term Granth is used by several sects to denote their authoritative writings. The quotations from the Adi Granth are taken from Trumpp's translation.

In modern days the number of those who have in one way or another come under the influence of Kabir is very great. In the Census Report for 1901 the number of Kabir Panthis alone is returned as 843,171 and the actual number is probably considerably larger, as in the United Provinces many Kabir Panthis seem to have been returned as Ramanandis and the figures for the Panjab are not included.[5]

There is no doubt as to the greatness of Kabir's influence as a religious teacher; he has also been described as the founder of Hindi literature. The hymns of Kabir are still sung by many a wandering minstrel, while his pithy sayings are frequently employed to win the attention of a dreamy audience or to clench a lengthy argument.

Unfortunately the material for a life of Kabir is miserably scanty. If we confine our attention to traditions of historical value, we are left in uncertainty as to the place and date of his birth, his name, the religion to which he was attached by birth, the state of life in which he lived, married or single, and the number of years that he resided in any particular place. It is true that many legends have gathered round his name, but however interesting these may be from various points of view they can hardly be said to meet the needs of those who desire accurate information.[6]

It is admitted by all Kabir Panthis that Kabir was brought up as a child in the house of Niru, a Muhammadan weaver.

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[4] Nanak is said to have been 27 years of age when he met Kabir. As Nanak was born in 1469 the year of meeting will have been 1496, the very year in which Sikandar Lodi, the Emperor of Delhi, visited Jaunpur and other cities in that neighbourhood.

[5] This total is distributed as follows: Central Provinces, 493,393: United Provinces, 215,771; Central India 124,600; Bombay Presidency, 9,407.

[6] It is stated in the *Banaras Gazetteer* that Kabir was born at Belhara, a village in the district of Azamgarh. According to the belief of Kabir Panthis he was born in 1398 and died in 1518. The latter date is probably correct; the former is probably dictated by a desire to make him contemporaneous with Ramanand who is supposed to have lived in the 14th Century.

In the JANAM SAKHI Nanak is reported to have told Babar that Kabir was a Muhammadan weaver. In the ADI GRANTH occur these lines: "By caste a weaver and patient of mind: utters Kabir with natural ease the excellencies of Ram."[7]

In one of his best known Hymns Kabir says that he will shortly give up weaving and devote himself entirely to singing the praises of Hari.[8] In another hymn he says that he had in a previous birth been born as a Brahmin, but had been reincarnated as a JULAHA (Muhammedan weaver) because he had in that life neglected the worship of Ram (Ram Bhajan).

In none of the writings that can be traced directly to Kabir is any account given as to the manner of his birth, but the following legends have long been current in this country:

The first legend relates that his mother was a Brahmin widow who went with her father on a pilgrimage to the shrine of a famous ascetic. To reward the devotion of the pilgrims the ascetic prayed that the woman might become the mother of a son. The prayer of so holy a man could not fail to find fulfilmen and in due course the Brahmin widow became the mother of Kabir. The mother to escape dishonour exposed the infant, who was discovered and adopted as her own by the wife of a weaver.[9]

According to another version of this story Ramanand, who was the ascetic referred to, said that he could not recall his blessing but would arrange that the birth should not be after the usual manner, but that the infant should issue from the palm of its mother's hand.[10] His promise was realised and the infant after birth was placed on a lotus flower in the midst of the Lahar Tank. It was there discovered by Nima, the wife of Niru, and by her taken to her husband's house.

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[7] In such passages Kabir seems to apply the name Ram to the supreme God and not to the incarnation of Vishnu. He writes in the *Bijak* that the true Master did not take birth in the family of Dasrath.

[8] Kabir likens the process of birth, death and re-birth to the movements of the shuttle. This passage may be interpreted as the expression of a hope that he will shortly obtain deliverance from the trials of transmigration.

[9] Most of the legends contained in this Chapter are taken from a Hindi pamphlet entitled *Kabir Kasauti*, published at Bombay in 1885. This pamphlet is the joint production of five members of the Kabir Panth and is based upon information gleaned both from books and oral tradition.

The second account is more poetical in character and runs thus:

Kabir descended from heaven to earth.[11] The lotus flower was blooming in the place where Kabir was born. The bees were tired of humming. Peacocks, larks and other kinds of birds in their flight passed circling round the tank. Thunder and lightning were in the air when Kabir became manifest is the heart of a lotus flower, in the midst of the Lahar Tank. A feeling of thirst overcame Nima, the newly wedded wife of Niru, the weaver as after the marriage ceremony she was making her way to her husband's house. She approached the tank but was much afraid when she there beheld the child. She thought in her heart 'this is probably the living evidence of the shame of some virgin widow.' Niru suggested that they might take the child to their house, but Nima at first demurred, thinking that such action might give rise to scandal. Women would ask, "Who is the mother of a child so beautiful that its eyes are like the lotus"? However laying aside all fears they took pity on the child. On approaching the house they were welcomed with the songs of women, but when the women saw the child dark thoughts arose in their hearts and they began to ask "How has she got this child"? Nima replied that she had got the child without giving birth to it and the women then refrained from asking further questions.

The mystery surrounding the birth of the child was further deepened when Niru called in a Qazi[12] and requested him to open a Qoran and find for the child a name. He found the name Kabir, and also from the same root, Akbar, Kubra and

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[10] This legend enables the Hindu section of the Panth to explain the name Kabir as a corruption of Kar-Bir or the hero (born from) the hand (of a Brahmin woman).

[11] In the *Kabir Kasauti* this phrase occurs—SEWAK HOKAR UTRE IS PIRTHIWIMANHI "becoming a servant he descended upon this earth."

[12] Qazi, a Muhammadan judge, whose services are requisitioned in connexion with births, marriages and other legal matters.

Kibriya. On finding these names the Qazi was much perplexed and bit his nails, for was not the term Kabir a title applied to God? News of what had taken place soon spread, and after a short while five or six more Qazis arrived upon the scene. All opened the Qoran, but with the same result. They closed the book in silent astonishment. It was impossible, they all agreed, that a title of such dignity should be given as a name to a weaver's child. They opened the Qoran again and found the names, Zinda, Khinjar, Pir and Haqqa. Thereupon they said to Niru, 'You must in some way destroy this child.' Niru in obedience to their order took the child within the house to put him to death, but before he had time to carry out his intention the child gave utterance to this SHABDA:

"I have come from an unknown place. Maya has deceived the world; no one knows me. I was not born of a woman, but manifested as a boy. My dwelling was in a lonely spot nigh to Kasi,[13] and there the weaver found me. I contain neither heaven (air) nor earth, but wisdom only. I have come to this earth in spiritual form and of spiritual significance is my name. I have neither bones nor blood nor skin. I reveal to men the SHABDA (word). My body is eternal. I am the highest being. These are the words of Kabir who is indestructible."

Thus were the Qazis defeated in their object and the name Kabir was given to the child.[14]

As a boy Kabir gave great offence to both Hindu and Muhammadan playmates. When in the course of play he cried out "Ram, Ram" and "Hari, Hari,"' the Muhammadans called him a KAFIR (unbeliever). To this charge he retorted that he only was a KAFIR who did evil. One day he put a TILAK on his forehead and a JANEO round his neck and cried out "Narain, Narain." This action roused the ire of the Brahmins, since they regarded it as an infringement of their privileges. To their protest he objected: "This is my faith, my tongue is Vishnu, my eyes are Narain, and Govind resides in my heart. What account will you give of your actions after death? Being a weaver, I wear a thread. You wear the sacred thread, and repeat the Gyatri and Gita daily, but Govind dwells in my heart. I am a sheep, you are shepherds; it is your duty to save us from sin. You are Brahmins, I am a weaver of Banaras. Hear my wisdom. You daily search after an earthly king, while I am contemplating Hari."[15]

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[13] Kasi, the Hindu name for Banaras.

[14] For further comments on this legend see Chapter II.

He was further taunted with being a NIGURA, one without the benefit of a spiritual guide. He was determined to remove what he, as well as they, regarded as a reproach. He desired to become the CHELA (disciple) of Ramanand but felt that there were difficulties in the way which could only be overcome by means of some artifice.

He knew that if only he could gain possession of the MANTRA peculiar to this sect, his initiation must necessarily follow. He learnt that Ramanand regularly visited a certain bathing GHAT and determined to lie down upon the steps of that GHAT in the hope that Ramanand might step on him by accident. His hope was realised and the holy man in his astonishment exclaimed "Ram, Ram." Kabir knew that no words would rise so readily to the lips of this holy man as the MANTRA of his order and so claimed that as he was already in possession of the MANTRA he could no longer be refused admission to the order.[16]

When Kabir announced that he had become the *chela* of Ramanand, both Hindus and Muhammadans were dismayed and a joint deputation went to inquire of Ramanand whether it were true that he had received a Muhammadan boy as one of his disciples. Ramanand asked them to produce the boy. The people took Kabir to him. Ramanand on his arrival raised the curtain which screened him from the public gaze and asked the boy when he had made him his disciple. Kabir answered. "Various are the MANTRAS that Gurus whisper into the ears of their disciples, but you struck me on the head and communicated to me the name of Ram." The SWAMI recalled the circumstance, and drawing aside the curtain clasped him to his breast and said, "Beyond all questioning you became my disciple." The members of the deputation returned home disappointed. Kabir returned to the weaver's house and set to work on the loom. When any Sadhu came to the house he used to have the ground prepared after the manner of Hindus and got food cooked for them in vessels not previously used. He himself would wait upon them while they took their food. His mother, Nima, was annoyed at these proceedings which, she said, were not in accordance with the customs of the family.

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[15] *Adi Granth*, Trumpp's translation, p. 661.

[16] Kabir Panthis in conversation speak of their MANTRA as "Ram Ram," but it is a mistake to suppose that these words constitute the MANTRA either of their Panth or of the Ramanandis. These MANTRAS may not be disclosed to the uninitiated.

From the time of his initiation Kabir is said to have regularly visited his Guru and, as years went on, to have taken part in religious disputations with distinguished Pandits who came to do battle with his master. According to tradition Kabir was not possessed of any great amount of booklore, but in any case he must have gained through instruction, conversation and participation in religious disputations a considerable knowledge of Hindu philosophical thought and familiarity with such questions as arose out of the meeting of Hindu with Muhammadan beliefs.

It appears from legends of uncertain date that he continued to work as a weaver, giving part of his earnings to Niru and spending the rest in charity and more especially in giving food to Sadhus. Stories are told as to how on several occasions he mysteriously disappeared for a while from his father's house and in miraculous ways supplied the needs of others.

By some Kabir is said to have been married to a woman, named Loi, and to have had by her two children, a son Kamal and a daughter Kamali. The circumstances which gave rise to this conjecture are thus related in KABIR KASAUTI.

One day at the age of thirty Kabir was walking along the bank of the Ganges when he came to a cottage belonging to a Bankhandi-Bairagi.[17] He went up to the cottage and there sat down. After some time a girl, about twenty years of age, also arrived. To her question as to who he was, Kabir replied 'I am Kabir.' She again inquired as to his caste and sect (BHESH). To both questions he returned the same answer, 'Kabir.' The girl observed that though many Sants had come to that place none of them had ever given such name for themselves, their caste or sect. Kabir said that in saying this she had said what was perfectly true.[18] Meanwhile more Sants arrived. Presently the girl brought forth from the house a large supply of milk which she divided into seven shares. Five shares she gave to the Sants, one to Kabir and the remaining share she kept for herself. Kabir placed his share on the ground. The Sants drank theirs and asked Kabir why he also did not drink his. Kabir replied that he was keeping it for a Sadhu, now on his way, travelling from the other side of the Ganges. The girl said, "Sir, drink your share, I have plenty left for him." Kabir made answer "My food is the Word of God."* Shortly afterwards the Sadhu arrived and the milk was given to him. The Sants asked the girl (Loi) of her parentage and how she came to be living in so lonely a spot. Loi replied that she had no parents living, that she had been brought up by a Sant, but that now he too was dead and she was living alone. They inquired the name of the Sant and the circumstances under which she had come to be living with him.

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[17] BANKHANDI is an epithet applied to Bairagis who live in the *jangal.*

The girl, Loi, replied, "The Sant was a Bankhandi-Bairagi and he lived on milk alone. In reply to questions concerning me he used to say, 'I was bathing one day in the Ganges when a basket struck against me. I opened the basket and found in it a female infant. I took the infant to my home and reared it by means of a wick soaked in milk. Having found the infant wrapped in clothes I gave it the name of Loi (blanket).' Such is the account that the Swami would give to the Sants'"

Loi having observed the gravity of Kabir said to him, "Swami, give me such teaching as will bring me peace of mind." Kabir was pleased with the obvious sincerity of the girl and instructed her thus, "Always repeat SATYA NAM (the true Name) and spend your days in the service of the Sants." In obedience to this teaching she laid aside all worldly thoughts, went to Kasi and passed her time in the service of the Sants. Nima thought that Kabir had brought home with him a wife and asked for what purpose he had married her as they did not live together as husband and wife.

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[18] The meaning of this legend appears to be that there is only one God and that all men are his servants and will one day be brought into close union with Him. Religious distinctions are therefore out of place. The religious reformer may have hoped that Hindus and Muhammadans would lay aside all prejudice and accept as a title for the one true God the comparatively unknown term, Kabir (The Great One).

* *"Ham Shabda ahari hain."*

On another occasion Kabir was walking along the banks of the Ganges, accompanied by Shaikh Taqqi, when the latter suddenly caught sight of the dead body of a child floating down the stream. The Shaikh suggested that Kabir should call the child. Kabir whispered something into its ears, whereupon it at once began to weep. Shaikh Taqqi allowed that Kabir had worked a miracle. On account of its beauty Kabir named the child KAMAL (Perfection) and made it over to Loi who reared it. The child regarded Loi as its mother and others seeing the child in Loi's lap regarded Kabir as a married man.

Some time afterwards Kabir happened to be in the house of a neighbour when his infant daughter died. Kabir sought permission to remove the dead body to his house. The mother, who had heard how he had brought Kamal back to life, after some persuasion induced the father to give his consent. Kabir recalled the child to life by means of SHABDA, called her KAMALI and made her over to Loi to be reared. Both children worked at the loom and addressed Kabir as SWAMIJI.

One day when Kamali was 20 years old she happened to be drawing water at a well, when a Pandit came up and asked for a drink. Having quenched his thirst he asked whose daughter she was. He was greatly horrified when he learnt that she was the daughter of a weaver and exclaimed 'You have broken my caste.' Kamali was at a loss to understand for what reason he had become so angry, and persuaded him to come and discuss matters with Kabir. Before either had had time to explain matters, Kabir, who could read the thoughts of men's hearts, exclaimed, "Before drinking water think on these things. What is defilement? Fishes, tortoises, blood, salt, rotten leaves and the carcases of dead animals are all to be found in water. Crores of men have been slain by *Kal;* at every step you take, you tread upon the dead body of some man and yet from such earth the vessels from which you drink are made. At meal times you take off your clothes for fear of defilement and wrap yourself in a DHOTI that has been woven by weaver. The fly that visits the dung hill settles on your food. How can you prevent this? Dispel such illusions from the mind; study the Vedas and take refuge in Ram."

At the Pandit's request Kabir gave him further instruction in the doctrine of SATYA NAM and gave him Kamali in marriage.

The plain speaking of Kabir and his general disregard for the conventions of society raised up enemies on every side. According to Kabir Panthi traditions it was Shaikh Taqqi who voiced the feelings of Muhammadans.[19] This famous Pir came before the Emperor, Sikandar Lodi, and accused Kabir of laying claim to Divine attributes. He urged that such conduct merited the penalty of death. The Emperor issued a warrant for his arrest and sent men to bring him to the court. Not till evening could the men who were sent persuade Kabir to accompany them. Kabir stood before the Emperor in silence. The Qazi exclaimed, "Why do you not salute the Emperor, you KAFIR?" Kabir replied, "Those only are Pirs who realise the pains of others, those who cannot are KAFIRS." The Emperor asked him why, when ordered to appear in the morning, he had not come till evening. Kabir replied that he had seen a sight which arrested his attention. The Emperor asked what kind of a sight could justify him in disregarding his commands. Kabir rejoined that he had been watching a string of camels passing through a street narrower than the eye of a needle. The Emperor said that he was a liar. Kabir replied, "O Emperor, realise how great is the distance between heaven and earth. Innumerable elephants and camels may be contained in the space between the sun and the moon, and all can be seen through the pupil of the eye which is smaller than the eye of a needle." The Emperor was satisfied and let him go, but the people murmured and complained that the Emperor had disregarded their complaints. Shaikh Taqqi said that it was contrary to the teaching of the Prophet that a man who claimed Divine powers should be allowed to live, and that Kabir should suffer as Mansur and Shams Tahrezi had suffered of old.[20]

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[19] On chronological and other grounds it seems highly improbable that Shaikh Taqqi played the part assigned to him in this legend. See Chapter II.

The Brahmins added that he was BE-DHARM because he had associated with a woman of ill fame and Rae Dass, the CHAMAR.[21] Kabir told the Emperor of his doctrine, but to no effect for he sided with the people and gave orders that Kabir should be put to death. Kabir was removed and made fast in chains. He was then placed on board a boat which was filled with stones. The boat sank, but Kabir re-appeared as a boy floating down the stream on a leopard's skin.[22] He was again captured and now an attempt was made to burn him alive. He was locked up in a hut which was afterwards set on fire. When the flames were extinguished Kabir re-appeared in a form of great beauty. He was now accused of witchcraft and the people demanded that he should be trampled to death by an infuriated elephant. Between the elephant and Kabir there appeared a lion, at the sight of which the elephant took fright.[23] finally the Emperor asked forgiveness of Kabir and expressed his willingness to undergo any punishment that he might name. To this Kabir replied that a man should sow flowers for those who had sown him thorns.

The stories so far related speak of Kabir as a resident of Kasi (Banaras). It is natural that his Hindu followers should wish to associate him as closely as possible with their sacred city, but there is evidence both from the BIJAK and the ADI GRANTH to show that he did not at any rate spend the whole of his life in Banaras.

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[20] Both these men were Sufi saints. Mansur was cruelly tortured and afterwards hung for saying of himself "'I am the Truth." Shams-ud-din Tahrezi was the MURSHID (spiritual director) of Jalal-ud-din, famous as the author of the Masnavi. He flourished about 1244.

[21] The CHAMARS are workers in leather and accounted of very low caste as being associated in their work with the skins of dead-animals. Several religious reformers were men of low caste: Rae Dass was a CHAMAR; Sena a barber; Dadu a cotton cleaner; Nabhaji, the author of the *Bhakt Mala,* a DOM (sweeper).

[22] Bairagis often carry about the skin of a deer or other animals upon which they take their seat upon the ground. It is symbolic of a life spent in places apart from the haunts of men.

[23] See additional Note, "Kabir in History," under Shaikh Abdul Kabir.

In the BIJAK is found a RAMAINI which may be interpreted thus: "Kabir settled for a while in Manikpur having heard of the praises of Shaikh Taqqi. He heard also about Uji in the district of Jaunpur. At Jhusi he heard the names of his Pirs.[24] He heard of twenty-one Pirs in all. They preach in the name of the Prophet. On hearing this I could not refrain from speaking. The people have looked on the shrines and gone astray. The works of Habibi (Beloved) and Nabi (Prophet) are all contrary to law (HARAM). O Shaikh Aqardi and Shaikh Saqardi, listen to my words. See the beginning as well as the end with open eyes, consider every period of the world's history."

In the opening lines of this Ramaini Kabir seems to be enumerating the places which he had visited in his search for religious guidance: in the closing lines to be grieving over the thought that more honour is paid to the tombs of the dead than to the GOD in whose service their lives were spent."[25]

In the ADI GRANTH these lines are put into the mouth of Kabir, "My Hajj is on the banks of the Gomti: where dwells my Pir, wearing a yellow robe."[26]

Reference is here apparently made to Jaunpur which is situated on the left or northern bank of the Gomti. Jaunpur was the capital of a famous Muhammadan (Sharqi) dynasty, Ibrahim, one of the kings of this dynasty (1412), was a great patron of Muhammadan learning, but was in this respect surpassed by Bibi Rajah, who built a magnificent Jami Mosque, a College and a Monastery. She also appropriated large sums of money for the maintenance of those learned in Theology and the Sciences. With the exception of the Mosque all these buildings were subsequently destroyed by Sikandar Lodi either on religious or political grounds.[27]

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[24] His Pirs, i.e. Shaikh Taqqi and his father Shaban-ul-millat, who were always closely associated together.

[25] For further comments upon this RAMAINI see Chapter II.

[26] Muhammadan Pirs wear yellow garments.

[27] Jaunpur is said to be a corruption of Javanpur. JAVAN, a term applied originally to the Greeks, was subsequently applied to the Muhammadans. The meaning of Jaunpur would therefore be The city of Muhammadans.

We gather from this quotation that Kabir was born elsewhere than in Jaunpur, but that he received religious instruction in that city.

There are many other stories connected with the life of Kabir, but we will only reproduce one more before passing on to consider the manner of his death. This story is of interest as it associates Kabir with Central India where at the present time his influence is most strongly felt.

There lived in the Deccan two brothers, Tatva and Jiva, who were anxious to find for themselves a spiritual guide. They used reilgiously to wash the feet of the many Sadhus who visited their house and listened attentively to their teaching. At a loss to discover which of these Sadhus were possessed of real spiritual power they devised the following test. They planted in the courtyard of their house a withered branch of a banyan tree and agreed to accept as their Guru that Sadhu whose power was such, that the washings of his feet would avail to restore the branch to life. For forty years they waited in vain for one who could satisfy the test and were almost in despair of ever finding the desired Guru, when Kabir arrived upon the scene. The branch when sprinkled with the water in which his feet had been washed immediately returned to life. Kabir was accepted as their Guru and gave utterance to these lines: "The Sadhus are my soul and I am the body of the Sadhus: I live in the Sadhus, as rain lives in the clouds. The Sadhus are my Atma, and I am the life of the Sadhus. I live in the Sadhus, as GHI lives in the milk. The Sadhus are my Atma and I am the breath of the Sadhus: I live in the Sadhus as fragrance lives in the flowers."

All accounts agree that the earthly life of Kabir came to a close at Maghar in the district of Gorakhpur. We are not told whether he had ever previously visited this place, but he may possibly have done so when on a visit to Gorakh Nath, the famous Yogi and founder of the Shivite sect that bears his name.

There are lines in the ADI GRANTH in which Kabir refers to the austerities practised by Gorakh Nath and speaks of him as having died in spite of all.[28]

[28] Gorakh Nath and another Hindu ascetic, Muchhandar, who

Tradition relates that Kabir died in extreme old age, when his body had become infirm and his hands were no longer able to produce the music with which he had in younger days celebrated the praises of Ram. If he had lost the company of earthly friends he felt more closely united, than ever before, to one from whom he would never more be parted. Such appear to be the thoughts which find expression in the following lines, quoted from the ADI GRANTH: "Banaras has been left by me and my intellect has become little: my whole life is lost in Shivpuri, at the time of death I have arisen and come to Maghar."

"O my King, I am a Bairagi and Yogi: when dying, I am not grieved, nor separated from Thee."

"The mind and breath are made the drinking gourd, the fiddle is constantly prepared: the string has become firm, it does not break, unbeaten the fiddle sounds."[29]

"Sing, sing, O bride, a beautiful song of blessing: King Ram, my husband, has come to my house."

It was the wish of his disciples that Kabir should end his days at Kasi where so much of his religious work had been accomplished. All who died in Kasi, they urged, would pass immediately into the presence of Ram, while those who died at Maghar would return to this world and assume the form of an ass. Kabir rebuked them for their want of faith. Is the power of Ram so limited that he cannot save his servant because he prefers to die outside Kasi, the city of Shiva?

"What Kasi? What Maghar? He who dies at Maghar is not dead, when Ram has taken up his abode in my heart: he who dies elsewhere puts Ram to shame."

A difficulty arose with regard to the disposal of his body after death. The Muhammadans desired to bury it and the Hindus to cremate it. As the rival parties discussed the question with growing warmth Kabir himself appeared and bade

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is more than once referred to in *Bijak*, are also by tradition associated with Jhusi. See *Allahabad Gazetteer*, p. 100.

[29] In Kabir literature the soul of man is often compared to a string. His soul is now attuned to sing the praises of God.

them raise the cloth in which the body lay enshrouded. They did as he commanded and lo! beneath the cloth there lay but a heap of flowers! Of these flowers the Hindus removed half and burnt them at Banaras, while what remained were buried at Maghar by Muhammadans.[30]

CHAPTER II

KABIR IN HISTORY

The following abstracts from standard books of reference will suffice to show that the name "Kabir" is not so rare as has sometimes been supposed. There is reason to question the accuracy of some of the dates[1] and reason to believe that some of Kabir's biographers, working upon the assumption that there was only one Kabir, have unhesitatingly appropriated details from the lives of several.

In KHAZINAT-UL-ASFIA (Treasury of Saints),[2] written by Maulvi Gulam Sarwar and published at Lahore about 1868, mention is made of:

(1) KABIR CHISHIT, Sufi and inhabitant of Nagore who on account of ill-treatment at the hands of Muhammadans journeyed in the direction of Gujerat and died there in 1854.

(2) SHAIKH KABIR JULAHA, the disciple and successor of Shaikh Taqqi, who is described as being one of the great men of his time and a leader among Theists. He is described as the author of many Hindi writings which prove him to have been a man of great ability. He taught the Sufi

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[30] A very similar story is told in connexion with the death of Nanak. See Hughes' Dictionary of Islam, p. 588.

[1] Dates may have been transferred from the History of one man to that of another bearing the same name, or difficulty may have been experienced in deciphering dates written in Persian figures, without an accompanying verbal explanation.

[2] In this book Shaikh Taqqi is described as HAYAK, the Arabic equivalent of the Persian JULLAHA. He is said to have lived at Manikpur and to have died in 1574.

doctrine of WISAL (Union with God) and preserved silence with regard to the contrary doctrine of FIRAQ (Separation). He is said to have been the first to write anything about God and his attributes in the Hindi language, and to have been the author of various Hindi poems. On account of his religious toleration he was accepted as a leader by Hindus as well as by Muhammadans and styled by the former PIR KABIR and by the latter BHAGAT KABIR. The date of his death is given as 1594.

(3) KHWAJAH AULIA KABIR who visited Bokhara and died in 1229.

(4) SYED KABIR-UD-DIN HASSAN of the same family as Kabir-ud-din Ismail, who is said to have travelled three times round the world and to have lived to the age of 180. He resided at Uch in Balakh (also the birth-place or Jalal-ud-din) where he died in 1490.

(5) SHAIKH KABIR, the son of Shaikh Munawar and resident of Bajaora, who is simply described as a conceited man and a victim of the opium habit.

In SAIR-UL-AQTAB (History of Pillar Saints), written by Shaikh Allah Diya, mention is made of

(6) SHAIKH ABDUL KABIR who is said to have been a saint from his mother's womb and to have possessed a great power of foretelling events. He was known as SHAIKH KABIR or BALA PIR and inherited the priestly robe of the Sufi from his father, Abdul Quddus. He performed many miracles and by merely shaking the sleeve of his robe was able to cause a lion to appear. He had a taste for singing and was lavish in his hospitality. He had four sons and many disciples. The king of Jaunpur, Sultan Sikandar Lodi, together with his Vizier, Bhura, and Malik Mahmud, determined to test his powers as a saint. It was arranged that they should visit him one evening, each having previously in his own mind thought of some particular dish. If the Pir supplied the want of each he was to be regarded as a man of God. As soon as they entered his house Kabir brought a dish of venison sandwiches and placed it before the king; to the Vizir he offered a bowl of soup and some bread and to Malik Mahmud a dish of sweetmeats. The result was that his guests begged forgiveness for having ever called his powers in question. This Kabir died in 1539. He

is said to have been succeeded by his son Shaikh Usman, who was generally known as Zinda Pir.[3]

In *Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh* by Mullah 'Abdul Qadir of Badaun mention is made of

(7) SHAIKH KABIR, a resident of Multan, who journeyed northwards to Balakh and returned from thence to India and travelled in the company of Akbar. Owing to exhaustion brought on by the severity of his devotions and night watches he is said to have presented the appearance of a drunkard. Mullah Abdul Qadir himself met this saint at Fatehpur in 1585 A.D.

In *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar* mention is made of

(8) AMIR KABIR MIR SYED ALI HAMDANI who visited Kashmir in 1379 and died there five years later. After his death a dispute arose concerning the disposal of his body between the people of Kashmir, Sultan Muhammad and Shaikh Aqwam-ud-din of Badakhshan. The last named finally secured the body, but the people of Kashmir erected a cenotaph at the place where he died.

In the *Ferishta* mention is also made of

(9) SYED AHMAD KABIR, the Father of Syed Jalal-ud-din, and

(10) KABIR-UD-DIN ISMAIL, grandson, disciple and successor of Syed Jalal-ud-din, otherwise known as MAKHDU JAHANIAN or JAHAN GUSHT SHAH from the fact that he travelled extensively to Mecca, Balakh etc. Kabir-ud-din Ismail also travelled extensively and died in 1421.

(11) At Jaunpur there is a small Masjid, built in memory of Divan Shah Kabir who was one of four brothers, all of whom lie buried in the same plot of ground. This Masjid, which was built during the reign of the Emperor Humayan, is situated in the Muhalla Tar Tala.

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[3] The name BALA PIR occurs in the list of the Mahants of the Dharm Dass section of the Kabir Panth and the words ZINDA PIR in the legend of the naming of Kabir.

CHAPTER III

DID KABIR BELONG TO THE SUFI SECT?

The traditional life of Kabir has a poetical beauty which in its power to commend a Muhammadan Saint to Hindu followers may be thankfully regarded as a prophecy of the greater reconciliation of conflicting faiths to which so many of us look forward. The veil that has been drawn over the first beginnings of an important religious movement we would reverently raise, trusting thereby to add additional lustre to the brave efforts of a distinguished champion of religious truth.

Wilson, the distinguished Sanskrit scholar, to whose investigations every English student of Indian religious thought owes so deep a debt of gratitude, writes of the improbability, not to say impossibility, of Kabir's having been a Muhammadan, and with no more respect does he treat Malcolm's suggestion that he belonged to the Sufi sect. Later writers have been content to yield to authority and to accept as established truth the judgement of a great scholar.

Had we believed that Wilson had carefully investigated all the documents that are now available to students, we should hardly presume to question the accuracy of his judgement, but we cannot help feeling that in the immensity of the tasks which he imposed upon himself he has overlooked some part of the evidence, or possibly too readily accepted the statements of fellow workers in the same field.

Any one who has read Wilson's accounts of Kabir's life would carry away the impression that Nabhaji, the author of the BHAKTA MALA, had recorded some at least of the legends which have found a place in a previous chapter. Nabhaji himself, to judge from the carefully printed edition of the BHAKTA MALA now current in India, is only responsible for the following statement:

"Kabir refused to acknowledge caste distinctions or to recognise the authority of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, nor did he set any store by the four divisions of life (*Ashram*) prescribed for Brahmins. He held that religion without *Bhakti* was no religion at all and that asceticism, fasting and almsgiving had no value if unaccompanied by worship (BHAJAN, hymn singing). By means of Ramainis, Shabdas and Sakhis he imparted religious instruction to Hindus and Muhammadans alike. He had no preference for either religion, but gave teaching that was appreciated by the followers of both. He spoke out his mind fearlessly and never made it his object merely to please his hearers."

This short account describes a man who had no great sympathy with Brahminical teaching, who believed in a personal God and in salvation by faith rather than by good works, and who delivered a message, regarded as God's message, to Hindus and Muhammadans alike.

This is all that is stated in the text, but to the text is appended a commentary written by a later hand.[1] In this commentary it is stated that Kabir in his desire to wear a KHANTI round his neck and a TILAK on his forehead (to attract a Hindu audience) made up his mind to become a disciple of Ramanand and achieved his purpose as described in a previous chapter,[2] that Muhammadans objected to the repetition of 'Ram, Ram,' by a co-religionist and asked Ramanand whether it were true that he had received a JULAHA as his disciple; that Ramanand at first denied that he had done so but when confronted with Kabir acknowledged his mistake. Mention is also made of the fact that Kabir was charged before the Emperor, Sikandar Lodi, and refused on that occasion to salute the Emperor, that he was sentenced to death and was in succession thrown into the Ganges, committed to the flames and exposed to the fury of an elephant, but all to no purpose. It is added that the Emperor, thwarted in his desire to destroy Kabir, recognised that he had acted wrongly, asked Kabir's forgiveness and offered to compensate him for the injuries inflicted.

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[1] According to one account Nabhaji wrote his account of the BHAGATS in Sanskrit and asked his disciple Priya Dass to provide it with a commentary. Priya made a beginning and then handed over the MS to Gobardhan Nath. Finally the commentary was completed by Narain Dass, a disciple of Gobardhan Nath, and published in 1769.

[2] We gather from the legend that Kabir was received into the Ramanandi Sect as a Hindu and that trouble arose subsequently when it was discovered that he was really a Muhammadan.

Nabhaji may have been acquainted with the legends now appended to his statement and his editor may have known of other legends not recorded, but we have no right to assume such knowledge, nor are we yet in a position to say at what time other legends gradually became current. All that we know is that such are now to be found in various writings of unknown date, but accepted as authoritative by members of the Kabir Panth.

We are inclined to accept both of the theories advanced by Malcolm and to believe not only that Kabir was a Muhammadan by birth but also that he was associated with the Sufi order; and that the great object of his life was to break down the barriers that separated Hindus from Muhammadans. We believe that in his desire to achieve this object he actually took up his residence in Banaras and associated there with the followers of Ramanand. We can well imagine that his teaching gave offence both to orthodox Muhammadans and to orthodox Hindus, and it is probable that both parties welcomed the opportunity afforded by Sikandar Lodi's visit to Jaunpur in 1495 to wait upon him with a request that he would rid them of one who despised tradition when in conflict with the truth.

Sikandar Lodi is represented by Muhammadan historians as one who was zealous for the faith and had on one occasion put to death a distinguished pandit, Jodhan by name, because he refused to allow that Islam had a monopoly of spiritual truth. Fortunately for Kabir, Muhammadan rulers were wont to allow Sufis considerable license in their criticism of the faith, especially when such Sufis combined personal piety with poetical talent. When we read how the enemies of Kabir reminded the Emperor of the fate that had befallen Mansur and Shams Tabrezi who were both distinguished Sufi saints, we feel that they had some knowledge of this weakness and feared lest Kabir might on such grounds escape the death penalty which alone would satisfy their embittered feelings. Their fears were realised, for we gather from the legend that the Emperor compromised the case; he spared the life of Kabir, but banished him from the city where his teaching had given so great offence.

That Kabir had been brought up in a Muhammadan family was probably a fact too well known to allow of contradiction.

All that his Hindu followers could do was to suggest that he was not of Muhammadan origin, but only a Muhammadan by adoption. The name Kabir was also too well established to allow of any alteration. It only remained to explain its origin in a way that would commend itself to those who accepted the story of the virgin birth. Such an explanation was to be found in the fact that Al Kabir is one of the 99 names of God in use among Muhammadans. The name Kabir occurs in the Qoran six times as a title of Allah and once as a title of Al-Rabb.

The legend that calls attention to this fact presents a curious blend of Hindu and Muhammadan procedure. It is customary for Muhammadans to open a Qoran and give to the child the name on which the eye of the reader may first chance to fall; it is customary for Hindus to bestow upon a child a name containing three words usually beginning with the same letter and so similar in sound. This name is suggested by the position of the stars at the time of birth and is known as the RAS or astronomical name. The three names, Akbar, Kubra and Kibriya said to have been found by the Qazi in the Qoran are all derived from the same root KBR 'great'. All three names are to be found in modern Qorans. Akbar occurs 22 times, Kubra 6 times and Kibriya twice. Of the three names Zinda, Khinjar and Pir, the first and third are Persian words and as such not found in the Qoran. Khinjar is probably a corruption of Khizar the name of the saint who is in the Qoran associated with Moses.

A legend containing impossible details can hardly be regarded as a literal representation of historical fact.

Muhammadan tradition asserts that Kabir had a son, Kamal by name. This name also is of Arabic origin and so a source of difficulty to those who regard Kabir as a Hindu SADHU. There is a word KAMMAL, a corruption of KAMBAL (blanket), and in one version of the Kamal legend it is stated that Kabir caught sight of the child floating down the stream, wrapped up in a blanket and cried out, not "Kamal, Kamal" but "Kammal, Kammal."

Muhammadan tradition implies that Kabir like other Sufi leaders was a married man, but as, in accordance with Muhammadan custom, no mention is made of his wife's name, Hindus were free to supply her with a Hindi name and chose Loi which also means a blanket.

There is a possible reference to his wife in the following lines contained in the ADI GRANTH.

"The first wife was ugly, of low caste, of ill-boding feature: wicked in the house of her father-in-law and in her father's house.

"The present wife is beautiful, intelligent, of auspicious features, easily child-bearing."

These lines may be interpreted to mean that Kabir had lost his wife, but found comfort in closer union with God; or they may mean that the soul at first united with a material body rejoiced in the thought of becoming spiritually one with God.

In certain respects the legendary life of Kabir presents remarkable parallels to incidents in the life of Christ. After an account of the virgin birth we read that Kabir, as a boy, meets and worsts in argument a learned Pandit, he is criticised for associating with the outcasts of society; he miraculously supplies the poor with bread; he incurs the hostility of the religious leaders of his time; he raises from the dead a boy and a girl and is ministered to by women. The full account of his appearance before Sikandar Lodi presents in many details a striking resemblance to Christ's trial before Pilate.

The books containing these legends are of comparatively late date and the writers may have been influenced by a desire to assimilate the life of Kabir to that of Christ.

Many of the legends, especially some which have not been mentioned in his chapter seem to have originated in a desire to explain the circumstances under which some of Kabir's best known sayings were first spoken, or to associate the memory of Kabir with persons and institutions held in special reverence by Hindus. Several appear in different forms and nearly all contain details which must raise difficulties in the minds of all who are not overcredulous.

In the *Dabistan*, a Persian history, said to have been written by Mohsin Fani of Kashmir in the reign of Akbar, it is stated that Kabir was a weaver and a Muwahid *i.e.* a believer in one God. It is further stated that in his desire to find spiritual guidance he visited Muslim as well as Hindu sages, and finally became a disciple of Ramanand under the circumstances already recorded in this legend. Mention is also made of the following story:

One day when certain Brahmins were expatiating on the purifying qualities of the Ganges water, Kabir filled his wooden cup with water from the river and offered it to them to drink. They were horrified at the thought of drinking out of the cup belonging to a low caste man; upon which Kabir remarked, "If the Ganges water cannot purify my cup, how can I believe that it can wash away my sins?"

The statement that Kabir was a Julaha and Muwahid is confirmed by Abul Fazl and has never been contradicted. What we have to determine is the exact meaning of the statement. Hindus have assumed that Kabir in early life actually followed the profession of a weaver and have quoted his use of weaving metaphors by way of illustration. This he may have done, but we must also bear in mind that it was customary for Muhammadans of that age to attach to their personal names the name of the profession with which their family had originally been associated. The term Muwahid was not, so far as I can learn, ever applied by Muhammadans to those whom they regarded as idolaters. It implies that he was a Theist and not a Pantheist. The prevailing impression that Kabir was a Pantheist appears to be based upon two false assumptions, (1) that he is responsible for all the teaching given by his Hindu followers at a later age and (2) that all the statements contained in the BIJAK represent his personal views. There is reason to believe that insufficient care has been taken in studying the context in which certain sayings occur; reason to fear that Kabir has been credited with the argument of Maya whom he at all times ruthlessly condemns.

Great interest attaches to the mention of Shaikh Taqqi. According to the Hindu legends Shaikh Taqqi was the rival and opponent of Kabir, while Muhammadans regard him as his Pir. In the RAMAINI quoted in the previous chapter there is probably a reference to two Shaikh Taqqis whom later writers have not been always careful to distinguish.

Shaikh Taqqi of Manikpur Kara was a NAJAF, (cotton cleaner) by profession and belonged to the Chistia order of Sufis. He is said to have died at Bhandarpur in 1545 but there is probably some mistake about the date. In the AINA OUDH it is stated that this Shaikh Taqqi was the disciple and successor of Shaikh Nathan Dana who himself succeeded Shaikh Khwajah Kargh and that the last named died in 1305. Shaikh Taqqi was succeeded by his son Makan who founded a village in the Fatehpur district which is called after him Makanpur. His descendants are still to be found in that and the neighbouring villages. From the statement contained in the RAMAINI it appears that Kabir visited Manikpur and remained there for some time in attendance upon the Shaikh or his successors.

The Manikpur referred to is situated on the Northern bank of the Ganges, between Fatehpur and Allahabad. It was for a short time the Military head quarters of the Emperor Sikandar Lodi. Near Manikpur, but on the Southern bank of the river is Kara, generally known as Kara Manikpur, at that time a city of considerable importance, the Muhammadan capital of the surrounding country Kara.

Kara Manikpur is the head quarters of a sect, called Maluk Dassis. Members of this sect when on pilgrimage to Jagannath are required to visit the Math of the Kabir Panthis and to receive there KABIR KA TARANI which consists of a piece of bread and a spoonful of sour rice water.[3]

At the same time it would seem that Kabir was more closely associated with Shaikh Taqqi of Jhusi[4] or his successors in office. This Shaikh was the son of Shaban-ul-Millat and belonged to the Soharwardia order of Sufis. He died in 1429

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[3] Maluk Dass is said to have been born in 1574. The Granth of this sect includes GYAN DIPAK, SUKH NIDAN and MALUK DASS KI BHAKTI. The two first are Kabir Panth writings. See Wilson, R. S. P. 102.

[4] Jhusi stands near the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna, in the immediate neighbourhood of Allahabad.

(A.H. 785) and his tomb at Jhusi is still a place of pilgrimage.[5] Kabir is said to have been a young man of about 30 years of age when he first made the acquaintance of the Shaikh. At the time he desired to have as his Pir one whose hand would ever remain over him to protect him from all evil. Shaikh Taqqi promised to help him in this way and proved true to his word, for even in the remote regions of Balkh and Bokhara Kabir saw the protecting hand of his Pir stretched over him as that of a guardian angel[6]. When Kabir returned from his wanderings and repaired to Jhusi to pay his respects to his Master he felt the pangs of hunger and asked that he might have some food. The Shaikh provided him with some vegetables, cooked rice and some skimmed milk spiced with caraway seeds. Kabir regarded these supplies as inadequate to the occasion and exclaimed:

"Sag, bhat, jirwani matha
Hamre Pir ke yehi hata."

"Vegetable, rice, skimmed milk spiced with caraway: These things only can be had in the market of my Pir."

The Shaikh was vexed with his ingratitude and replied:

"Yih chhor aur kya khah hai mati,
Toh upar pare che mas ki tati."

"Besides this what would you eat, earth?
May six months disease come over you."

As the result of this curse Kabir for six months suffered severely from attacks of diarrhœa. He rolled on the ground in agony and the two empty water courses in which he was then compelled to pass his time are still to be seen, the one bearing the name of Kabir Nala and the other that of Lotan Nala. At the end of six months he was once more permitted to approach his Pir. He apologized for his past ingratitude and received a blessing from his Master. Kabir besought the Shaikh to bestow upon him such a blessing that he might be enabled to remove those differences of belief which separated Hindus from Muhammadans. Shaikh Taqqi regretted that this lay beyond his power, but said that he would bring it about that both Hindus and Muhammadans should regard Kabir himself with reverence. Kamal, the son of Kabir when he heard of his father's request went to Shaikh Taqqi and requested him as his Pir to release him from all further obligations to his father for he could never bring himself to look with favour upon Hindus. The Shaikh gave Kamal permission to go and settle at Jalalpur, some ten miles distant from Jhusi.

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[5] In the AINA OUDH the father of Shaikh Taqqui is said to have been born in 1261.

[6] The people of Jhusi were not sure that Kabir actually visited those distant lands. They thought it possible that he merely closed his eyes and visited them in imagination.

Kabir was sorrowful when he learnt of his son's determination and exclaimed,

> "Dubba bans Kabir ka upja put Kamal"

"The family of Kabir became extinct when his son Kamal was born."[7]

Previous to the mutiny there was at Jhusi a large Mosque, associated with the memory of Shaikh Taqqi and endowed with landed property, bringing in an annual income of Rs. 100,000. After the mutiny the Mosque was destroyed and the lands confiscated.[8]

The various allusions to persons and places contained in the RAMAINI quoted in the previous chapter have been a great cause of perplexity to Hindu readers of the BIJAK. Manikpur they explained as being the city of the MAN (mind). Of Uji, a village near Kharauna in the district of Jaunpur, famous of old as the residence of some distinguished Muhammadan saint, they had never heard. When the people of Jhusi were asked about the 'Ikkis Pir' (twenty one Pir) they at once made mention of the Akela Per (solitary tree), a large tree that stands alone and under which a Muhammadan saint used to take up his abode. The promptness of their reply suggested that the original text might have been emended by some Hindu who had never heard of the Akela Per. Shaikh Akardi and Shaikh Saqardi who became a still greater cause of perplexity were according to local tradition the Tujawar or caretakers of Shaikh Taqqi's shrine, who were regarded by the people with so great respect that they were popularly known as Shaikhs.

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[7] A similar saying occurs in the Adi Granth: The progeny of Kabir dead; there was born a son Kamal. Having given up the remembrance of Hari, he has brought wealth to the house.

[8] Most of the information concerning Jhusi traditions was supplied by Shah Fida Hussain, Government Pensioner, resident in Jhusi.

We have probably written enough to show that it is not impossible that Kabir should have been both a Muhammadan and a Sufi. There is a picture of Kabir which is more likely to have been painted by a Hindu than by a Muhammadan and which represents him as having Muhammadan features, and his grave at Maghar has always been in the keeping of Muhammadans. That a Muhammadan should have been the Father of Hindi literature may indeed be a cause of surprise, but it must not be forgotten that Hindus also have gained distinction as writers of Persian poetry. Kabir, moreover, was a man of no ordinary ability and determination, and the purpose of his life was to get his message accepted by those who were best reached through the Hindi language.

CHAPTER IV

THE TEACHING OF KABIR

In the days of Kabir the power of the Brahmins was very great. As some would express it, the whole land was overcast by the dark clouds of priestcraft and sacerdotalism. Brahmanism, invigorated by its triumph over Buddhism, asserted its authority over all, until the Muhammadans invaded the country and gradually extended their influence throughout Northern India. Then people saw that there were men whose views about religion were radically different from those of their own Pandits; they became acquainted with men who were only with difficulty restrained on political grounds from exterminating all who refused to acquiesce in their own religious beliefs.

We are not in a position to say how far religious thinkers were encouraged by the presence of Muhammadans to give expression to the thoughts of their hearts, but there is no doubt that the presence of the followers of Islam stimulated thought on such subjects as caste, spiritual birth and the personality of God. Among the Muhammadans none were more ready than the Sufis to recognise the good in every form of belief and dwell upon the love of God towards all his creatures.

Before considering the character of Kabir's teaching we have first to determine what his teaching was. It seems probable that the teaching of Kabir was delivered orally and not reduced to writing till a later age. The earliest writings in which his teaching is recorded are the BIJAK and the ADI GRANTH. It is probable that neither of these books was composed till at least fifty years after the death of Kabir, and they can hardly be regarded as retaining in all passages the actual words of the teacher, much less such words without additions.

Though it is inadvisable to express any definite opinion on such a subject, until the contents of the BIJAK have been carefully examined and compared with the productions of a later age, yet there is reason to believe that the teaching of Kabir has gradually become more and more Hindu in form. At any rate we have no right to assume that the teaching of Kabir was identical with that given at the present time by the Mahants of the Panth that bears his name.

So far the contents of the BIJAK have only been made known in part, and all who have studied the book allow that it contains many passages that are practically unintelligible to us of a later age, dark riddles which they are unable to interpret. An exposition of teaching which is based upon a selection from selections, must of necessity be defective; and may possibly be misleading, if regarded as an interpretation of the whole. A mind influenced by Christian thought is naturally inclined to dwell upon teaching that seems to have affinity with truths that it is in a position to appreciate. Passages which to the original teacher may have seemed no less important are hurriedly passed over because the reader through lack of knowledge is unable to estimate their value.

Bearing in mind these limitations we will proceed to examine the teaching of Kabir as illustrated by quotations from the BIJAK and the ADI GRANTH.[1] We shall meet with teaching which will immediately call to mind passages of Scripture;[2] we shall meet with condemnations of falsehood which, as regards directness of speech, should amply satisfy the feelings of the most militant type of Missionary. We shall admire the Teacher, alike for his sincerity and his courage.

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[1] See Additional Note on *Bijak*.

THE WORLD AND RELIGION.

There are men who live in the world as though it were their permanent abode; men who take thought for the body and pay heed to its desires, as though it were a permanent possession; men who accumulate riches as though they were free from the thraldom of death. Such men will never obtain true happiness, nor will they unravel the knots by which they are bound, until they look to God for help. He who would know God must die to the world. God is a jealous God who loves not those who entertained in their hearts love for another god. Man cannot serve God and mammon. Only those who give their entire heart to God will realise their true self. The knowledge of God is as a precious diamond, recognised only by those who are spiritually minded. The true servants of God are few in numbers, and to the worldly minded seem as men who are beside themselves.

All who live in this world are liable to temptation; the black snake coils itself round the sandal tree. The poison of the snake received into the body works corruption and issues in death. Those alone escape who place their trust in God.

Selfishness and pride of intellect are the enemies of spiritual development[3] Those only see God who have a forgiving spirit. The struggle against evil is hard to maintain, but slothfulness is fatal. The opportunity lost may not recur. NOW is the time to prepare for the journey that lies before us.

ILLUSTRATIONS

(1) We are idols of clay, to which the name of man

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[2] To those who have a knowledge of the subject the references to Sufi teaching will probably appear to be very numerous.

[3] Kabir's condemnation of pride and commendation of humility are much more in accordance with the teaching of Sufi Saints than with the practice of Hindu pandits.

is given; we are guests of four days in a very great pit of fuel is our place. G.[4]

(2) The physician has died, the sick man has died, the whole world has died; One, O Kabir, has not died, for whom is no weeper. G.

(3) O man, thou hast a precious body indeed. Thy flesh is not used. No ornaments are made of thy bones; no drums are mounted with thy leather. B.

(4) Man in this world is wholly sinful from his very birth, and there are many ready to claim his body. The parents say, "He is our child and we have nourished him for our own benefit." The wife says, "He is my husband," and like a tigress wishes to seize him. The children gaze at him, and like the god of death, keep their mouths wide open for support. The vulture and the crow look forward to his death. The pigs and the dogs wait on the road for his bier to pass on its way to the burning ghat. The fire says, "I shall not leave him, until he is utterly consumed." The earth says, 'I shall obtain him.' The wind thinks of carrying him off. O ignorant people, you speak of this body as your house; do you not see that a hundred enemies hang about your throat? Beguiled by the illusion of this world, you regard such a body as your own. So many desire a share in your body that you will live in trouble all your life. O madmen, you do not wake up to a knowledge of this, but repeatedly say, 'It is mine, it is mine.' B.

(5) Adding KAURI to KAURI he brings together lakhs and crores. At the time of departure he gets nothing at all, even his LANGOTI is plucked away from him. G.

(6) To the miser wealth is given for the sake of keeping it. The fool says, 'The property is mine.'

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[4] G indicates a quotation from the ADI GRANTH; B a quotation from the BIJAK.

When the staff of Yama strikes his head, the matter is decided in a moment. G.

(7) Immense riches and a kingdom which extends from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof could not equal the pleasure arising out of devotion (to God). Of what use then is wealth? B.

(8) Fire does not burn it, the wind does not carry it away, no thief comes near it; collect the wealth of the name of Ram, that wealth is never lost. G.

(9) For gold he is not obtained, Ram is obtained for the price of the heart. G.

(10) Without devotion life is spent to no purpose; without worshipping the Lord in the society of the pious, happiness remains in none. G.

(11) The poor soul of man is tied to this world with many knots. It cannot unloose itself without the help of God. B.

(12) He (God) whom you seek, is near you. He is always near to his devotees and far from those who do no worship Him. B.

(13) Kabir says, Where shall I find a supremely loving saint who will give pleasure, destroy pain and remove all stains of sin? B.

(14) Who whilst living, goes on dying, he lives again; in this wise he is absorbed in space; he who remains in the darkness, unaffected by the darkness, is no more thrown into the sea of existence. G.

(15) Now my mind on the contrary has become eternal; then the mind is known, when one dies when living. G.

(16) At the bank of a river and at a Tirtha there is no reassurance for the mind of him who is clinging to light ways. G.

(17) What is muttering, what austerity, what vows and worship to him in whose heart there is another love? G.

(18) What is muttering, what austerity and control of the passions, what vows and ablutions; so long as the right, loving worship of the Lord is not known? G.

(19) In the heart there is a looking-glass, the face is not seen in it; then only you will see the face when the doubleness of the heart is removed. B.

(20) The pure diamond is sold for plates of gold. He who knows not its value, what will he do with it? B.

(21) The diamond was lying on the road, besmeared with ashes: many in their ignorance passed it by, but the diamond specialist picked it up. B.

(22) Pearls are scattered on the road; the blind draw near and depart; without the light of the Lord, the world passes them by. G.

(23) The black snake is in the heart. It has deposited venom in the souls of all; the few who sincerely worship the true God, will be saved. B.

(24) Why should one suffer a dog to listen to the SMRITIS? why should one sing the praises of Hari in the presence of a SAKAT? that Ram, Ram is contained in all should on no account be told to a SAKAT; why should one suffer a crow to feed on camphor? why should one give a black snake milk to drink? the instruction of the foolish is waste of knowledge; a maund of soap cannot wash charcoal white. G.

(25) Sandal, restrain thy fragrance, on thy account the wood is cut down; the living slay the living and regard only the dead. B.

(26) He is naturally called drunk, who is drinking the juice of Ram and meditating on Divine knowledge. G.

(27) If one take nectar and besprinkle a NIM tree, its nature does not leave it, says Kabir. G.

(28) Venomous snakes have twined round the sandal tree. What can the sandal do? In every pore venom has soaked in, where shall nectar enter?. B.

(29) The snake of separation has attached itself to the body, and darted its fangs into the heart. Into the body of the Sadhu it finds no admission: prepare yourself for what may happen. B.

(30) In the small pond, O fish, the net is spread by the fisherman; in this small pond thou wilt not escape, think again of the ocean. G.

(31) The pride of intellect is manifold, now a swindler, now a thief; now a liar, now a murderer; men, sages and gods have run after it in vain; its mansion has a hundred gates. B.

(32) In pride there is adversity, in sin there is suffering; in kindness there is stability, and in forgiveness there is God. B.

(33) Unless you have a forgiving spirit, you will not see God. Yau may speechify as much as you like, but without a forgiving nature you will never reach Him. B.

(34) He who enters into intimacy with the highest light, he subdues the five senses. Religious merit and demerit, both he discards. G.

(35) What thou art doing tomorrow, do now; what thou art doing now, do at once: afterwards nothing will be done, when death comes on thy head. G.

(36) Now is the time to prepare, henceforth the path

is difficult; the travellers all hasten to purchase, where there is neither trade nor market. B.

(37) The righteous man does not give up his piety, though he meet with crores of wicked persons: even as the sandal tree is not deprived of its cooling properties though venomous snakes twine round it. B.

(38) With the SAKAT company should not be kept, one should flee far from him; if a black vessel is touched, some stain is received. G.

RELIGION IN LIFE

God is one; how has it come about that there are many religions? All men are of one blood; how comes it about that they are separated by religion and by caste? God is one; the Hindus are therefore at fault in their worship of many gods. These are in truth the creation of Maya; they have their origin in sin and are themselves the cause of sin in others.

Muhammadans put their trust in circumcision, Hindus adore the Vedas and the beauties of Nature. The things which are seen are transitory. True worship should have as its object the unseen source of all truth, the unseen Creator of the universe.

The Hindus bathe in sacred streams, go on pilgrimage to sacred places, bow down to images of brass and stone, and think that in so doing they are honouring God. In this they are mistaken. What God desires is purity of heart; to rest in symbols that should lead men on to God is to be guilty of idolatry.

Hindus and Muhammadans alike profess to fast, but curb not the desires of the flesh; they praise God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. All such religion is vain.

Muhammadans repeat prayers and texts of scripture which they cannot understand; Hindus believe in gods who destroy men, sport with milkmaids and assume the form of animals. All such religion is vain.

Vain too are the distinctions of caste. All shades of colour are but broken arcs of light, all varieties in human nature are but fragments of true humanity. The right to approach God is not the monopoly of Brahmins but is freely granted to all who are characterised by sincerity of heart. He who reflects on Brahma is rightly called a Brahmin. The distinctions observed by Hindus are merely productive of that pride which God abhors. The rules regarding impurity deal merely with externals and cleanse not the thoughts of the heart.

Hindus believe in transmigration. If they would be free from the trials of this world, let them meditate on the Supreme and attend the courts of His temple.

Above all things let men speak and practise the truth. Suffer all men to worship God according to their convictions. Be not the slaves of tradition and love not controversy for its own sake. Fear not to walk upon unbeaten tracks, if such tracks bring you near to Him who is the truth.

Men are saved by faith and not by works. None can understand the mind of God; put your trust in Him; let Him do what seemeth Him good. Spiritual joy is felt, though it cannot be expressed in words. To set forth the glory of God is a task beyond the powers of human language. Those who put their trust in God are no longer subject to fear. Perfect love casteth out fear.

ILLUSTRATIONS

(39) God, light, sound and one woman; from these have sprung Hari, Brahma and Tripurari. Innumerable are emblems of Shiva and Bhavani, which they have established, but they know not their own beginning nor end. A dwelling has been prepared for them: Hari, Brahma and Shiva are the three headmen and each has his own village. B.

(40) I and you are of one blood, and one life animates us both; from one mother is the world born; what knowledge is this which makes us separate? B.

(41) All have come from the same country and have

landed at one ghat, but the evil influences of this world have divded us into innumerable sects. B.

(42) From whence have Hindus and Turks come? By whom have these ways been started? Having searched and reflected in thy mind tell me. By whom have Paradise and Hell been made? G.

(43) By force and love circumcision is made: I shall not agree to it, O brother. If God will make me a Turk by him will I be circumcised: if a man becomes a Turk by being circumcised, what shall be done with a woman? She must remain a Hindu. G.

(44) If your KHUDA wished circumcision, he would have sent you circumcised into the world. If by circumcision you become a Muhammadan in that case what should you do with your women? A woman is said to be the half of man; being so, would she remain a Hindu? If by wearing the sacred thread a man becomes a Brahmin then what do your women wear? They by birth are Shudrins, why should you being a PANDE take the meal placed by them before you? Whence have the Hindus and Muhammadans come? Who has started these religious systems? Think well in your hearts who has obtained heaven. O mad man, give up the illusion of this world. O brethren, you resist (the warnings of conscience). Kabir is on the road to God and is marching on to his end, forsaking all partial views. B.

(45) Is Brahma great, or he by whom he is produced? Is the Veda great or he from whom it is come? G.

(46) What thou seest, that is passing away: whom thou dost not see, on him continue to reflect. When in the tenth gate the key is given: then the sight of the merciful one is obtained. G.

(47) A well-made picture is of high value: leave the picture and think of the painter. B.

Variously coloured is this immense world: leaving the picture, keep the painter in thy thoughts. G.

(48) O Saints, the world has gone mad; if I tell the truth it comes down upon me to kill me, but believes a lie. I have seen the devout and the pious who regularly bathe in the mornings. They forsake God and worship stones; in them there is no wisdom......They have commenced to worship brass and stones and are proud of their pilgrimages. They wear garlands, caps and frontal marks and *chhaps* on their arms, and engage in singing the praises of their gods; they have forsaken God. B.

(49) The beads are of wood, the gods of stone, the Ganges and the Jumna are water. Rama and Krishna are dead. The four Vedas are fictitious stories. B.

(50) If by worshipping stones one can find God, I shall worship a mountain: better than these stones (idols) are the stones of the flour mill with which men grind their corn. B.

(51) Although I entreat much, even falling at their feet, with tears in my eyes, the Hindus do not forsake idol-worship and the Muhammadans are too stiff-necked to hear anything. B.

(52) For the sake of bathing, there are many Tirthas, O foolish mind; for the sake of worshipping there are many idols. Kabir says, No emancipation is thus obtained, emancipation is in the service of Hari. G.

(53) If by immersion in the water salvation be obtained, the frogs bathe continually. As the frogs, so are these men, again and again they fall into the womb. G.

(54) A stone is shaped by the hammer and formed into an image with breasts and feet; If this image be true, then it will eat the hammerer. G.

(55) Kabir says, I am completely at a loss; Is the Tirtha great or the servant of Hari? G.

(56) As long as the sun does not rise the stars sparkle; so as long as perfect knowledge (of God) is not obtained men practise ritualism. B.

(57) The water is near but the cattle do not drink in wading through it. By continually remembering Hari water issues. That water is pure, says Kabir. G.

(58) Within his heart is filthiness; though he bathe at a Tirtha, he will not go to Paradise. By the belief of the people nothing is effected, Ram is not ignorant. G.

(59) The Hindus fast on the 11th of the light half of each month for *sinhgara* (a sort of fruit) and milk. They give up food during the day, but do not curb the evil passions of their heart and take meat. The Muhammadans keep fasts, repeat the NAMAZ and (early in the morning) cry aloud "Bismil" like the crowing of a cock …………Kabir says, "O saints do not call on Rama or Khuda." B.

(60) O Moulvi, what books are you explaining? Although day and night you remain babbling and jabbering you have not found out the one (true) religion. B.

(61) All have exclaimed, Master, Master, but to me this doubt arises; How can they sit down with the Master, whom they do not know? G.

(62) The mind knows everything and knowingly commits vices; what is the good of the lamp, if with it in his hand a man fails into the well? G.

(63) Follow the true Sahib (God) who will uphold you in all your trials. He was not born in Dasrath's family and did not oppress the king of Lanka. Jasoda did not fondle him in her lap and he did not enter the womb of Devaki. He did not ravage the world. He did not des-

cend into PATAL to deceive Bali. He did not fight with King Bali nor did he kill Hiranyakash, throwing him down on the ground. He did not assume the form of a boar nor did he destroy the Kshattriyas. He did not hold the Gobar Dhana on the tip of his fingers nor did he remain in the jungle with the milkmaids (of Muttra and Brindaban). He is neither SHALGRAMA, nor any other stones; he is not fish, nor tortoise, dwellers in the water. He died not at Dwarawati nor was his corpse buried at Jagannath. Kabir proclaims, let none follow such teachings; he whom they believe to be of gross and material elements is of subtle principles. B.

(64) Brahma is dead with Shiva who lived in Kashi; the immortals are dead. In Muttra Krishna, the milkman, died. The ten incarnations are dead. Machhindra Nath, Gorakh, Dattatreya and Vyas are no longer living. Kabir says, with a loud voice: "All these persons have fallen into the slip-knot of death." B.

(65) Whilst dwelling in the womb, there is no clan nor caste; from the seed of Brahma the whole creation is made.

Say, O Pandit, When were the Brahmins made; by saying, "I am a Brahmin," thy life and religion are lost.

If thou art a Brahmin born of a Brahmin woman, why hast thou not come in another way?

Whose art thou, the Brahmin? Whose am I, the Sudra; whose blood am I? whose milk art thou?

Kabir says, Who reflects on Brahma, he by me is called a Brahmin. G.

(66) Colour proceeds from colour, yet behold all are but one; of what colour then is life? Think well of this. G.

(67) By the touch of others you Brahmins consider yourselves polluted. Let me ask you, who is lower than

you? You are puffed up with pride. Great pride never produces any good. How will he who is called the vanquisher of the proud bear with your pride?

(68) There is impurity in water, impurity in earth; there is impurity at the time of birth, there is impurity in the hour of death, there is impurity in destruction (corruption of the body?).

In the eyes is impurity, in the speech is impurity and in the ears impurity.

In rising and sitting impurity clings to man, impurity falls into the food.

The way of ensnaring every one knows, but few only the way of escape.

Kabir says, those who reflect in their heart on Ram, in them no impurity is found. G.

(69) As fixed and movable things, as worms and moths, in many and various ways have we been born.

Many such houses will be inhabited by us, till at length we return to the womb of Ram. G.

(70) Having wandered through the 84 lakhs of wombs he has come into the world; now having gone out of the body he has no spot nor place. G.

(71) Kabir says, Meditate thou on the Supreme. Go to his house, that thou come not again. G.

(72) Clear away the pain of birth and death, the pleasure of works, that the soul may be liberated from rebirth. G.

(73) To be truthful is best of all, if the heart be truthful. A man may speak as much as he likes: but there is no pleasure apart from truthfulness. B.

(74) He who has no check upon his tongue, no truth in his heart: with such a one keep not company. He will kill you on the highway. B.

(75) No act of devotion can equal truth; no crime is so heinous as falsehood; in the heart where truth abides, there is my abode. G.

(76) If you are a true dealer, open the market of veracity; keep clean your inward man, and repel oppression to a distance. G.

(77) Put a check upon the tongue; speak not much; associate with the wise; investigate the words of the teacher. G.

(78) Let truth be your rate of interest, and fix it in your heart; a real diamond shuld be purchased; the mock gem is waste of capital. G.

(79) I have examined the religious doctrines of Muhammadans and Hindus. They do not lay aside their bigotry for the sake of relish for their tongues. B.

(80) Kabir cries aloud to his fellows, "Ascend the sandal ridge; whether there be a road prepared or not, what matters it to me?" G.

(81) O God, thou knowest thine own movements, I have no power to know them. Kabir says, "In this the world has erred and has been led into doubt." B.

(82) Thy name is my support, as the flower will grow out of the lotus stalk. Kabir says, I am the slave of thy house, vivify or kill me, as it please thee. G.

(83) As many as are making efforts, they are drowned; the ocean is not crossed by them.

Though they be performing works, and many abstinences, their mind is burnt by egotism. G.

(84) Kabir says, I am a sacrifice to my own Guru, by whom I remain in connexion with the society of the pious. G.

(85) O Madhava, my thirst for water does not cease; in drinking the water the fire increases still more.

Thou art the ocean, I am the fish of the water; I dwell in the water; without the water, I am done for. G.

(86) In me there is nothing mine; whatever there is, that is thine. In entrusting what is thine to thee, what remains mine? G.

(87) If a dumb person eats molasses, what can he say about it when questioned? G.

(88) If I make the seven oceans ink, if I make the trees my pen, if I make the earth the paper, the glory of Hari cannot be written? G.

(89) If the fear of God springs up, fear goes; then fear is absorbed in the fear of God.

If the fear of God subsides, then fear again cleaves to man; when a man loses the fear of God, fear springs up in his heart; he dies. G.

(90) Where the fearless one is, there is no fear, where fear is, there Hari is not; Kabir says, having reflected in his mind: "Hear this, O ye saints." G.

(91) On the day on which I died, on that day joy sprang up. The Lord met with me, Govind honours his own companion. G.

(92) Death of which the world is afraid, is joy to my mind; by death the full perfect joy is obtained. G.

THE WAY TO GOD

Kabir was a great believer in quiet reflection as a means of approach to God.

He recognised that the ancient scriptures of both Muhamadans and Hindus were of a certain value, but felt that their value had been greatly overestimated.

Through the understanding of the heart and mind man become conscious of God's existence. Thoughts and feelings are expressed in words, words are composed of letters. All that is of use in communicating to man a knowledge of God has a significance that may well be regarded as sacred. What is multiform now will hereafter be seen to be single. The 52 letters[5] will give place to the one letter which denotes man's union with God. The revelation of God, given in Ram, surpasses all other revelations in simplicity and purity, but the unity of Truth has not as yet been fully apprehended.

Through his own powers man cannot attain to a knowledge of God; but God will reveal Himself to those who listen to his voice. He alone overcomes doubts and truly lives who has welcomed this message in his heart.

Strange and sad it seems to those who have experienced a knowledge of the Truth that men should be content to grope on still in darkness.

Men are not equally endowed with spiritual insight. The mass of men must seek guidance of those who have, through a knowledge of God, discovered for themselves the way. The Hindus trust in vain those who wear the symbol of sacrifice while they lead lives of pride and self-indulgence. Helmsmen of this kind will never bring the boat to the haven where it should be. Others there are who practise all kinds of austerities, but mistaking the means for the end find not the true path. Those who escape not themselves from death, are unable to impart to others the gift of life.

The true guide is one whose love is fixed on God; who recognises his own worthlessness apart from God; who lives for others and god-like himself has entered into life. For such a one death has lost its terrors. He is the true ascetic and walks in the path of life.

ILLUSTRATIONS

(93) O Qazi, What book is expounded by thee; all such as are pondering on the book are killed; no one has obtained true knowledge; give up the book, adore Ram, O foolish one; thou art practising heavy oppression.

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[5] Kabir probably reckoned that there were 52 consonants in Sanskrit and Arabic, the sacred languages of Hindus and Muhammadans respectively.

Kabir puts his trust on Ram; the Turks are consumed and defeated.

(94) Thou expoundest the book right that Allah is no woman or man; but by reading and perusing nothing is effected, when there is no information in the heart. G.

(95) By the Turk God is known from worship, by the Hindu from the Veda and Puranas; in order to form the mind divine knowledge should be read to some extent. G.

(96) Thou shouldst ride on thy own reflection; thou shouldst put thy foot into the stirrup of tranquillity of mind. Kabir says, Those are good riders who keep aloof from the Veda and Qoran. G.

(97) I know that reading is good, but better than reading is meditation; the attachment to Ram I do not give up, though people revile me. G.

(98) The 52 letters are joined together by me, but I am not able to know one letter; Kabir tells the word of the true one; who becomes a Pandit, he remains fearless.

The profession of the Pandit is for the sake of the people; he who is skilled in divine knowledge, he reflects the truth. In whose heart such an understanding is; he will know it, says Kabir. G.

(99) Remove doubt, put aside the paper; having investigated the 52 letters apply thy mind to the feet of Hari. G.

(100) As the stars at dawn pass away, so the world passes away; these two letters (Ram) do not pass away, them Kabir has seized. G.

(101) There are many words and there is a great difference between them; accept the true word. Kabir says he who has found the true word, has no pleasure in this life. B.

(102) My word is of the word; hear it, go not astray; if man wishes to know the truth, let him investigate the word. G.

(103) By the power of the word the sin of this world is destroyed. The word makes kings forsake their kingdoms. He who has investigated the word has done his work well. B.

(104) Without hearing the word it is utter darkness; say, whither shall anyone go; without finding the gateway of the word, man will ever be astray. G.

(105) Without the word the Shastras are blind. Say whither shall one go? They do not find the gateway of the word but grope on still in darkness. B.

(106) There are many words, but take the pith of them; he who takes not the essence, says Kabir, will live a profitless life. G.

(107) Doubt has triumphed over the whole world. No one has overcome it. He who finds out the word will overcome it. B.

(108) Think whence the world has come and where has it established itself. Kabir says, I am a lover of the word which has shown me the unseen (God). B.

(109) I have wept for this world but no one has wept with me; he alone will weep with me who understood the word. B.

(110) All speak of God, but to me this doubt arises, how can they sit down with God whom they do not know? B.

(111) Thou pasturest us, never bringing us to the other side; Thou art a Brahmin, I am a weaver of Kashi, understand my divine knowledge. Thou petitionest Kings and Rajas, my meditation is with Hari. G.

(112) The jogis, ascetics, austere devotees and Sannyasis wander about at many Tirthas; those with plucked out

hair, those with *munj* cord, the silent ones, those who are wearing plaited hair, all are dying at the end; the Tantras are attended to by them, but not Ram; on whose tongue is put the name of Ram. What can Yama do to him? The Shastras, Vedas, astrology and many, many grammar they know; they know the Tantras, Mantras and all medicines, yet at the end they must die; they enjoy dominion, an umbrella and many beautiful women; betel, camphor, perfume and sandal, yet at the end they must die; all the Vedas, Puranas and Smritis are searched by them but in no wise are they spared; Kabir says, Utter Ram, he extinguishes birth and death. G.

(113) "The Pundits are in error by reading the Vedas. They have no common sense. They daily go through their morning and evening rites and other ceremonies with great punctuality and regularity. They have caused the Gayatri to be read and repeated in the four *yugs;* ask them—who has obtained freedom from sin by doing so? They consider themselves polluted by the touch of others: ask them who is lower then they are? B.

(114) Who wear dhotis of three yards and a half and three-fold cords; on whose necks are rosaries, and in whose hands are white lotus; these cheats of Banaras are not called the Saints of Hari. Having scoured the vessels they put them on, having washed the wood they light it; digging out the earth they make two fire places, but eat whole men. G.

(115) If by wandering about naked union with Hari be obtained; then every deer of the forest will become emancipated.

What are the naked? What are those with skins? When they do not know the Supreme?

If by shaving the head, perfection is obtained; the sheep is emancipated, no one is lost.

Kabir says, Hear, O man and brother; without the name of Ram no one has obtained salvation. G.

(116) In our house the string of the body is continually stretched out; on thy breast is a sacrificial thread; Thou readest the Veda and Gyatri; in our heart dwells Govind.

On my tongue is Vishnu, in my eyes Narayan, in my heart dwells Govind; when at the gate of Yama he will ask thee, O fool, What wilt thou say to Mukand?

We are the cattle; thou art the cowherd, O Lord, who art our keeper through the several births.

(117) What can he do whose teacher is blind? The blind pushes the blind and both fall into a well. B.

(118) How is it possible to reach the city when the guide cannot point out the road? When the boat is crazy, how shall the passengers get clear of the ghat? G.

(119) The man who fixes his love on the true teacher is contained in him. They could not be separated; they have two bodies but one spirit. B.

(120) I am the worst of all, every one is good except me; who considers himself in this light, he is my friend. G.

(121) The tree bears not fruit for itself, nor for itself does the stream collect its waters; for the benefit of others alone does the sage assume a bodily shape. G.

(122) The body is wounded by a spear; the head is broken off and left in the flesh; it cannot be extracted without the loadstone; a thousand other stones are of no avail. G.

(123) From heaven and hell I am freed by the favour of the true Guru; I remain in the wave of the lotus foot at the end and the beginning. G.

(124) In this society thou wilt no die; if thou knowest his order, thou wilt be united with the Lord. G.

(125) Death by which the whole world is frightened; that death is lighted up by the word of the Guru. G.

(126) Making divine knowledge and meditation his patched quilt, and the word the needle, he puts the thread into the head of the needle; making the five elements his deer-skin he walks in the way of the Guru. G.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The Bijak

The BIJAK (Account Book or Invoice) is recognised as the authoritative exposition of Kabir's teaching. It was probably produced about 1570, or some 20 years before the teaching of Nanak embodied in the ADI GRANTH by Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru of the Sikh community. Most of the sayings attributed to Kabir in the ADI GRANTH are also to be found in the BIJAK, though the editor of the GRANTH has not scrupled to re-arrange the subject matter.

There are several printed editions of the BIJAK. The two best known editions are both supplied with a commentary, the one by Maharaja Bishwa Nath Singh of Rewa[1] and the other by Baba Puran Dass. The former edition has been printed at Banaras, Lucknow and Bombay, and also without the commentary at Gaya; the latter at Lucknow and Allahabad (1905). Of the former it is said that "the editor has tried to expound the SAGUNA UPASANA of Rama through the teaching of Kabir, where by the term SAGUNA UPASANA is meant the religious contemplation of Rama as the embodiment of all good qualities." This edition is not well thought of by Kabir Panthis. The author of the second commentary, Baba Puran Dass, lived at

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[1] In the *Life of Kabir* by Munshi Mohan Lall, Kayasth of Lucknow, a work which is largely based upon *Anurag Sagar,* it is stated that Kabir visited Turkistan and on his return spent some time with the Maharaja of Rewa by whom he was most hospitably received. In return for kindness received Kabir promised the Maharaja who at the time was childless that his descendants should sit upon his throne for 42 generations.

Nagjhari in the district of Burhanpur, M.P., and flourished about 1837.

The Rev. Prem Chand of the Baptist Mission, Monghyr, had another edition printed in Calcutta in 1890. The editor of this edition writes:

> "Some thirty years ago I was lent a manuscript copy of the BIJAK, taken from the Murshidabad edition. This I had copied out and afterwards compared my copy with others from different parts of the country. I found in these a certain number of DOHAS (couplets) which were not in my copy and these I had printed at the end of the book. The other poetical pieces were the same in all editions. I corrected various clerical errors and separated words which had been allowed to run into one another and added a few foot-notes to make the meaning clear to any ordinary Hindi scholar."

This edition contains 83 RAMAINI, 113 SHABDA, 33 hymns of various kinds and 364 SAKHIS. To these have been added 60 SAKHIS found in other editions.

THE DOCTRINE OF SHABDA (WORD)

A doctrine which might be so described is taught in many of the Hindu religious sects, but it is not easy to determine in each particular case either the origin or character of this teaching.

In the writings of Kabir three thoughts seem to underlie such teaching: (1) All thought is expressed in language, (2) Every letter of the alphabet, as a constituent part of language, has significance, and (3) The plurality of letters and words now in use will appear as one, when the Maya that deludes men in their present conditions shall have been overcome. The two-lettered Ram seems to Kabir the nearest approach in this world to the unity of Truth or the letterless one.

A distinguished Sanskrit scholar explained to me the Hindu conception of SHABDA somewhat in this way. Man desires knowledge. Knowledge is obtainable by means of (1) Perception and (2) Inference. These two channels are acknowledged by all and to them are added by some (3) SHABDA, sound (including the voice of the teacher?) and (4) UPARNAM or reasoning by analogy.

By Mimansists all verbal information is regarded as authoritative in itself, unless it can be shown to be derived from a corrupt source. Those who deny that the Vedas are eternal or self-derived should prove that the source from which they are derived is tainted. The Mimansists do not believe in a personal God but there are others who accept this teaching and also believe in the personality of God. Such regard the Vedas as a God-given revelation.

The term SHABDA does not occur in the Vedas, but in one Hymn VAK (Speech) is personified.

For further information this scholar referred me to the third volume of John Muir's "Original Sanskrit Texts," which deals with the Vedas, their origin, inspiration and authority.

It is not improbable that this doctrine, as set forth in the literature of the Kabir Panth has been influenced by the writings of St. John, as is confessedly the case as regards the teaching of the Radhi Swami Sect of modern origin. In the Hindi translation of the New Testament Logos (Word) is represented by BACHAN and not by SHABDA.

CHAPTER IV

SAKHIS ATTRIBUTED TO KABIR

All Kabir Panthis have at their command a considerable number of Sakhis or rhyming couplets, bearing witness to the truth[1] The rhythm of many of these is very fine, with the result that important teaching given in this form is easily remembered.

It is not at all likely that all the Sakhis attributed to Kabir were realy uttered by him, but most of them are in substance consistent with teaching to be met with in the BIJAK. A good linguist would probably, on linguistic grounds, reject many as of later origin.[2]

Many of the Sakhis embody teaching such as was current among Sufis and embodied in Persian poetry. Some suggest verses of the Bible or Qoran, some in a slightly different form have been attributed to other authors and may be regarded as expressing truths generally current in the country. We may safely credit Kabir with a considerable amount of originality and, even where originality seems unlikely, feel grateful to him for the genius with which he has given expression to old thoughts.[3]

In making this selection I have been guided by the judgement of Kabir Panthis and also by my own judgement as regards the subject matter and the rhythm of the original. I have allowed a certain number of Sakhis to retain their place in this collection in spite of the fact that they have been previously quoted.

(1) My Lord's a store supplier great, in merchandise he deals; nor beams nor scales, in his own hands this great world weighs and feels. (*Fallon*).

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[1] Sakhi is the corruption of a Sanskrit word meaning evidence.

[2] For the benefit of Hindi scholars this collection of Sakhis has also been printed in the original Hindi. A collection of 2,500 Kabir Sakhis has been published at the Advocate Press, Lucknow, price One Rupee.

[3] It has seemed best to omit all reference to possible sources, until so complicated a subject has been more thoroughly investigated.

Shams Tabrez wrote: "Who is that person who weighs and distributes without scales or measure yet his measuring and distribution is correct?"

(2) He who made the whole world, that Guru was manifested; the Guru who saw him with his eyes, that Guru revealed Him to men.

Cf. I Jn. i 3-1.

(3) One poor spirit bound with many ties; in its own strength it cannot escape, till God rescue it.

PIW, the word translated God, is a term applied to husband by wife; the loved one.

(4) The *chela* whose Guru is blind, while he himself is more blind; the blind one gives a push to his blind fellow; they both fall into the well.

Neither understands the truth; one pushes this way, the other another; both come to grief.

(5) The soul (Atma) and the great soul (Paramatma) for many ages remained apart; the true Guru came as a dealer (DALLAL) and made of them a beauteous mixture.

(6) A sinner from my birth, in sin from head to foot I lie; O generous giver, comforter, but listen to my cry. (*Fallon*).

With the reading in the ordinary Hindi text, translate second line, "O God, remover of pain, deliver me."

(6) A Guru should be as a knife grinder; the rust of a life time he removes in a moment.

(7) Regard your Guru as a knife grinder, let him grind your heart; cleansing the heart from all impurity, let him make it bright as a mirror.

(8) Kal hovers over the head, Kal comes not into sight; Kabir says, Lay hold of the Guru's words (the Mantra) that he may rescue your soul from death.

(9) The Guru is the potter and the disciple the vessel;

he removes all defects. He places the support (SAHARA) within before with blows he fashions the vessels into shape.

The HAHARA or SAHARA is an instrument of wood or stone which with one hand the potter holds within the jar while with the other he strikes. In this way the wall of the jar is able to resist the force of the blows administered by the other hand from without. The public may be deceived into thinking that the Guru is cruel in his treatment of the chela.

(10) As he revolves his rosary, life passes away and knows not the secrets of his heart; throw away the rosary of the hand and revolve the rosary of the heart.

There is a double play upon words: MAN = heart, MANKA = rosary; PHER = secrets, PHER also = resolve.

(11) A man steals an anvil, and offers a needle as alms; he climbs aloft to see how distant is the chariot.

The man who makes this miserable offering thinks that God will be so pleased with his generosity that he will at once send a chariot to fetch him to heaven.

Fallon translates thus: "He steals an anvil and a needle gives in charity; he then the house top mounts to see how far's heaven's chariot sent for me."

(12) Apart from life, life comes not into existence, life lives on life; refuse not to have pity on life; Pandit, take thought on this.

(13) Under the influence of Shabda one man died to the world, another gave up his throne; those who have understood Shabda, their work is completed.

(14) A man may be a great preacher, as the vulture soars in the sky; but its food is on the earth; does flying in the air make of it a saint?

Preaching in itself is useless, unless the life corresponds. The vulture may fly in the sky, but on the earth it devours refuse and so can never be respected.

(15) Whatever I have is not my own, it is thine; it is thine own that I give thee; what have I?

(16) Strain your water before you drink it; test your Guru before you commit yourself to him.

(17) The humble obtain salvation to a man, so many as are submissive, those sink who are puffed up with the pride of high birth.

The reference here is to the ocean of rebirths; the humble-minded reach the further shore in safety; the proud sink in the waters and escape not from the troubles of this world.

(18) When the Guru is covetous, his disciple will be grasping; both employ trickery; both will be drowned in their folly, having boarded a ship of stone.

The chela to protect himself from the greed of the Guru conceals the extent of his possessions. At first he was tricked into owning that he had property, but not a second time; he tricked the guru. In this way both fail to cross the ocean of rebirths. In one of the Kabir legends, it is said that Kabir was placed on board a boat loaded with stones that it might sink in mid stream, but he miraculously escaped. The idea may have been suggested by this SAKHI.

(19) From one country have they come; at one *ghat* have they disembarked. They have breathed the air of the world, and on twelve paths have they gone their way.

BARAH BAT is a proverbial expression, scattered, dispersed, cast to the winds. All men are of one blood, all are born of human parentage, caste distinctions, invented of men, are productive of much evil.

Fallon translates: "All from one country come, alighted also at one port; by winds of wordly passion driven, all scattered are in sport."

(20) The lascivious, the ill-tempered and the covetous, for such devotion to God is impossible. Brave is the man who for devotion to God is ready to give up caste and family.

(21) Small is the door of devotion (BHAKTI), as the tenth part of a mustard seed. The heart of man is swollen

with pride to the size of an elephant, how can he pass within?

Cf. St. Matt. xix. 24.

(22) The great having attained greatness become exceedingly proud. Those who have no knowledge of the true Guru, whatever their caste, are CHAMARS.

ROM ROM—the hairs on the human body; there is no spot where there is no hair, no point at which the great do not display pride.

(23) The worship of a devotee and the water of a torrent in the rains, both flow deep; but that only should be called a river which continues to flow in the hot weather (Jeth = June).

The devotee whose devotion depends upon prosperity is no true devotee.

(24) He who sows for you thorns, for him do you sow flowers; you will have flowers at the time of flowering; he will find a TRISUL.

Trisul may signify a large thorn or it may mean that such a one will be punished by Shiva.

(25) Do not oppress the weak, their sighs have great power; by the puffs of the bellows iron is converted to flames (*or* is utterly consumed).

If the puffs from the skin of a dead animal can do so much, how much more will the sighs of the living effect. The skin of goats, buffaloes and bullocks are used as bellows.

(26) Be true to God and loving to his servants whether your hair be long or entirely removed.

Many *Bairagis* shaved their heads. To Kabir such matters were of trivial importance.

(27) The GHAT in which love dwells not, know that GHAT to be a burning GHAT (MASAN); that heart is as the blacksmith's bellows which breath, but have no life.

There is here a play upon the word *Ghat*. *Ghat* which

=a vessel, is often used of the human heart. *Ghat*, is also used, as=ghat, the burning *Ghat* where the bodies of the dead are burnt.

(28) Love grows not in the fields nor is it on sale in the bazar; the man devoid of love will be bound and cast into hell. (YAMPUR, the city of Yam).

(29) He may drink the cup of love who gives his all (lit. his head) to God; the covetous cannot give all, but only know the name of love, *or* He drinks the cup of love who lays down his life for others; he who works for reward, merely speaks of love.

(30) A man may read many books before he dies and yet not be a Pandit; he is a Pandit who understand the two and a half letters which form the word Love.

(31) There is no work of merit equal to truth and no sin equal to falsehood; in whose heart Truth dwells, in his heart dwells God himself.

(32) Those who say and do not are great liars; in the end, when God holds his Durbar, they will be thrust out.

Dhakka khana is a phrase applied to badmashes, thrust out of all respectable society.

(33) When the sun rises, darkness disappears; before the wisdom of the Guru the corrupt thoughts of men disappear; covetousnes destroys sound judgment and pride devotion to God.

(34) Weeds destroy the crops; the ignorant destroy the assembly; covetousness spoils devotion, as a mixture of earth destroys the value of saffron.

(35) Those who sought found, diving down into deep waters; the heron in its helplessness remained sitting upon the bank.

Fallon gives a different version of this *Sakhi* which he translates: Who in deep waters plunged and sought have found; but foolish me sat by the shore, through fear of being drowned. This form of the saying is attributed to Dharm Dass.

(36) All say 'Lord, Lord' (*Sahib*), but my fear is of a different kind; when I know not God by sight, where can I take my seat or how shall I sit down with a God whom I have not kown?

(37) The house of God is distant, as is a tall palm; he who climbs to the top, tastes of heaven; he who falls is ground to pieces.

(38) What you would do to-morrow, do to-day; what you would do to-day do at once; in a moment the deluge (*Parlai*) will come, then what time will there be for doing?

PARLAI is used of the destruction with which each of the several ages closes.

(39) When I went in search of evil men, none appeared to view; when I searched my own heart, I felt that none were so evil as myself.

(40) Full knowledge of God is not attained when the heart has not been united with God; devotion is simply that of imitation, the colour is not fast.

(41) A cage with nine doors, in it a bird like air; that it should remain there is the marvel; what wonder if it escape?

(42) In times of trouble men remember God, but not in times of ease; should they remember God in times of ease, would they ever experience trouble?

(43) Live on friendly terms with all, be ready to speak about all; in word agree with all men, but abide in your own abode.

The rhythm of this Sakhi is so fine that I cannot refrain from printing it in Roman character:

Sab se hiliye sab se miliye, sab ke lijiye naun;
Hanji, Hanji, sab se kahiye, basiye apne gaun.

This saying is generally interpreted to mean that men should be tolerant of religious beliefs differing from their own, though in no hurry to surrender traditional beliefs.

It has also been rendered thus:

Associate with all on friendly terms; address every one with respect (give them their full titles); agree with every one in what he says, and you will have a village of your own to live in, i.e. Humour the public and you will soon have them in your power.

(44) Upon seeing the mill revolving, Kabir wept; the grain that falls between the stones can never escape entire.

(45) All men speak of the mill, but none make mention of the pin; the grain that abides by the pin, even its hair is not disturbed.

The two stones of the mill are heaven and earth, nearly all who live upon the earth are overcome of evil; the few who escape are those who abide by the pin, *i.e.* those who call upon God.

(46) The Brahmins of this age are objects of ridicule; give not to them alms: they with their families will go to hell, and take with them their employers (*i.e.* those who give them fees or alms).

(47) The company of the saints will make your burdens light; the company of the evil means quarrelling throughout the eight watches.

This saying is by Fallon attributed to Tulsi Dass.

(48) That day is blessed which causes you to meet a holy man; as you embrace him fervently, sin is driven from the body.

A saying similar to this is to be found among the Muhammadan traditions (*Hadis*).

(49) Through association with a Sadhu comes remembrance of God; that hour is recorded to a man's credit in his account with God; all the rest is as valueless as air.

(50) The mirror of God is the body of the Sadhu; he who wishes to see, let him see the invisible in him (the Sadhu).

(51) The Sadhu is the river, love is the water; in that place wash your body; Kabir says, Be clean, in company with the Sadhus.

As people wash their clothes on the banks of a river, so should they seek purity of heart through associating with Sadhus.

(52) The tree does not store its fruit for its own use, nor the river its water; for the benefit of others has the Sadhu adopted human form.

(53) *Yam* roars like a lion, cries aloud Kabir; were not the Guru merciful, Yam would tear and rend.

(54) He who has chosen a bodily Guru and has failed to recognise the true Guru; time after time he rises and sinks, ensnared in the ocean of existence.

A bodily guru is one who is a guru in outward appearance, one merely qualified to give instruction as to ritual, sacrifice, alms etc., and not to give spiritual counsel.

(55) The *Chela* should be willing to give everything to his Guru; the Guru should refuse to take anything from his *Chela*.

Many gurus frequently visit the houses of their chelas and by noisy demonstrations in which they are assisted by Bairagis and curses extort offerings from those who at first declined to give.

(56) The true Guru took the arrow of the Shabda

and prepared to shoot; that which he shot with love found its home within the body.

(57) You are the wife of one, but have become the prostitute of many; say with whose corpse will you be burnt? for you are the wife of many.

There is one God whom men should love; what will be the fate of those who love false gods?

(58) The true Guru is a great money changer, testing the good and the evil; rescuing from the world the good, he takes it under his own protection.

(59) As the snake when it sees the man who has received the *mantra*, lowers its hood; so *Kal*, awed by the name written on the *Pan* leaf, turns his head away.

The second line contains a reference to the consecration of the *Pan* leaf by the Head Mahant. See Ch. VI.

(60) The Chakwi remains apart from her mate throughout the night, in the early morning they meet; the man who remains apart from God meets him neither by day nor night.

(61) He who removes another's head, removes his own; in God's Durbar the account will have to be settled.

(62) The power that cannot be described, the form that imparts life (the vision of God is life), whoever becomes one with him (as milk with water); that man, says Kabir to Dharm Dass, *Kal* cannot destroy.

Union with the true God who has neither form nor shape leads on to the development of man's true self over which death has no power.

(63) He who reproaches me is my friend; he supplies the soap to wash my dirty linen.

The man who is reproached pays heed to what is said and reforms. A similar saying is attributed to the Sufi saint, Imam Ghizali, who used the word 'washerman' instead of 'soap.'

(64) Made articles are quickly destroyed and once destroyed are not put right; by an admixture of vinegar milk is curdled and cannot again be turned to milk.

(65) For man to assume a body is difficult; it cannot be done twice. The ripe fruit that falls to the ground, cannot again be attached to the tree.

Hindus who believe in transmigration explain this as meaning that many ages will elapse before any particular person will again enter the world as a man.

(66) We know not what the quarter of a second may bring and yet we make plans for the morrow; death comes suddenly as the hawk pounces down on the partridge.

(67) The gardener comes to the garden and seeing him the buds cry out, "The full-blown flowers are culled to-day, to-morrow our turn will come."

(68) The earth said to the potter, why do you trample on me? the day will come when I shall trample on you.

The potter tramples on the earth to make it workable and plastic.

(69) All help the strong; no one helps the weak. A breeze gives fresh life to the fire, but extinguishes the candle.

(70) What place has the coward on the wrestling ground?, When wrestler meets with wrestler then is a real contest.

(71) Consider him a wrestler, striving to attain the favour of God, who though crushed to pieces, refuses to give up the struggle.

In the second line reference is made to an instruction often given to a wrestler by his trainer, 'Crush him to pieces.' (*Us ke purze purze dila kar do*).

(72) The days of yore are gone; he loved not God

(Hari); of what use is remorse, when the birds have eaten all the crops?

These words are often used of a 'ne'er do well,' when on the point of death.

(73) The wood that has already been burnt (in the process of conversion into charcoal) that too cries out: "If I go to the blacksmith's forge, I shall be burnt a second time."

Sinners die once in this world and a second time in the world to come.

(74) Remain apart from the world, as water refuses to mingle with oil; deposit your heart where is neither death nor the dungeons of *Kal*.

(75) Who saves his head, loses his head; who severs his head, finds a head; as the wick of a candle gives additional light when trimmed.

The head is regarded as the most precious of human possessions; a man will give his head for a friend.

(76) The pearl is found in the oyster, the oyster is in the sea; the diver brings him up; with no one else is the power.

There is probably here a play upon words. The word translated Diver may also mean, One who lives through death, or conquers after a hard struggle.

(77) Consider the parable of the sieve; it suffers the flour to pass, but retains the husk; so men let pass what is good and swallow what is useless.

Sar = that which passes through the sieve; *Asar* = that which is retained.

(78) Consider the sugar cane press; the juice flows out, the fragments of cane remain.

His heart is wanting in wisdom who retains thoughts of no value and disregards spiritual mysteries.

(79) All Sadhus are in appearance alike, resembling a field of poppies; some few thinkers are as red flowers, the rest are perfectly white.

It is the white poppy that is cultivated in Indian fields for the production of opium.

(80) Holy men will not relinquish holiness, though they associate with crores of unholy men; though snakes may cling to the sandal tree, it will never lose its coolness.

(81) Ask not a Sadhu about his caste, but about his knowledge of God; when you are determining the price of a sword, there is no need to consider the sheath.

The sword is what you want, it matters little of what kind or of what colour the sheath may be.

(82) The methods of a Sadhu should be those of a winnowing fan; he should lay hold of the weighty matters and let subjects of little moment fly away.

(83) Kabir says: To associate with a Sadhu is like sitting near a seller of perfumes; though the seller sell you nought, yet you enjoy the scent of his perfumes.

(84) As an ant is carrying off a grain of rice,, it falls in with a grain of DAL. Kabir says: both you cannot carry away, take the one and leave the other.

(85) A mad man was beating the hole of a snake, but the snake was not hit; fool, it is not the snake's hole that bites; it is the snake that devours men.

(86) Where is the boundary of the heavens?, what is the weight of the world? what is the caste of a Sadhu?, what is the price of the Alchemist's stone?,

(87) The dog of a Sadhu is virtuous, while evil is the mother of one who becomes not the *chela* of a Guru; the one sits and hears the praises of Hari; the other speaks evil of Gurus.

(88) Learn to distinguish the honest man and the thief from their manner of speech; all the works that are within proceed forth by way of the mouth.

Cf. St. Matt. xii 34. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

(89) In the midst of the highest heaven there is a shining light; he who has no Guru cannot reach the palace; he only will reach it who is under the guidance of a true Guru.

(90) Feel no care; be free from care; the giver is powerful; the beasts of the field, the birds and the insects have neither wealth nor store house.

(91) The tortoise takes care of its egg; without breasts it supplies its needs; so God provides for all and makes provision for the three LOKAS (earth, heaven and hell).

(92) Whatever I did, you did; I did nothing myself; should man say, I did it, it was in your strength that it was done.

Cf. Phil. ii. 13.

Shams-i-Tabrez, the famous Sufi, is said to have raised a man from the dead. Three times he addressed the corpse, saying, 'In the name of God, I bid the rise.' These words had no effect. He then said, 'In my name I bid thee rise' and the man rose. The idea is that man's real power lies in the consciousness of his union with God. So long as he addressed God as one apart from himself, his prayer was disregarded.

(93) Everything is from God and nothing from his servant; he can change a mustard seed into a mountain and a mountain into a mustard seed.

(94) Should all the earth be turned into paper and all the tree into pens; should the seven seas be turned into ink, yet could not an account of God be written.

(95) In blessings, O God, thou surpassest all, in thy

dealings with men thou art without a rival; God is chief of all kings, and yet He lived upon earth as a FAQIR.

(96) We shall not die, though all creation die; we have found one that quickeneth.

These lines form part of an introduction to a *Bhajan*.

(97) Whoever forsakes what is false and productive of pride and becomes as dust on the road, he will find God.

(98) The difference between the true and the false Sadhu is as that between the *Am* (mango) and the Babul trees; the former bears life-producing fruit, the latter thorns.

Phal (fruit) is often used of the results of action.

(99) When you see a Sadhu approaching, run, touch with your hand his feet (and apply them to your forehead). It may be that in this form God himself will meet you.

(100) All say 'Ram, Ram,' but there is a difference in the saying; one associated with many, another was absorbed in one.

The writer seems to be here distinguishing between Ram, the son of Dasrath, and Ram, as used as a title of the one true God.

(101) O Narayan, there have been countless mighty rulers in this world; they used to speak of I and mine, but when they died they took not away with them a single straw.

(102) If a man be meek, humble, respectful and obedient to *Sadhus*, in his heart I dwell, as a fish dwells in the water.

(103) Water stays not at a high level, but descends; he who stoops down can raise up the water and drink; he

who remains standing must go away with thirst unquenched.

(104) Only the Guru is found, but no disciple (every one presumes to teach, none are willing to learn); there is some hope of success, when a disciple is found.

(105) What is the use of greatness? the palm is a tall tree, but none sit under its shade and its fruit is out of reach.

(106) If you wish to worship Ram, worship him at once; when will you find another opportunity? The grass that now is fresh and green will shortly be dried as fuel.

(107) Thou camest into this world for gain; gamble not away thy life, weigh carefully in thy mind, this moment will not return again.

CHAPTER V

THE KABIR PANTH

I

The Kabir Panthis of Northern and Central India recognise two main divisions of the Panth, one with headquarters at the Kabir Chaura in Benaras and a branch establishment at Maghar, and a second, founded by Dharm Dass, with headquarters in the Chattisgarh District, in the Central Provinces. The former is known as BAP (Father) and the latter as MAI (Mother). The relations between these two divisions have at times been strained. The Math at Puri, where, in the worship of Jagannath, distinctions of caste are disregarded, is respected by both as a place of pilgrimage.[1]

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[1] The division of the Panth into twelve branches, as given in Wilson, R. H. seems to be quite fanciful. There are other branches at Bombay, in Gujerat, etc., but it is doubtful whether these regard themselves as independent of these two main divisions. Of these two divisions, that which bears the name of Dharm Dass, though barely mentioned by Wilson, is the more influential at the present time.

It is impossible in the light of the present information to determine the date at which either of these divisions first came into existence, but both were probably founded by Hindu disciples of Kabir.

As already stated Kabir died and was buried at Maghar, in the district of Gorakhpur. The shrine at Maghar which has always been in the charge of Muhammadans was restored in 1567 by Nawab Fidae Khan, the officer in command of the imperial army which occupied the city in that year.[2]

There are at the present time two *Maths* at Maghar, one for Muhammadans, containing the shrine, and another for Hindus, in the enclosure of which is a hole in which Kabir is said to have sat, awaiting death.[3] Each of these Maths which adjoin one another, has accommodation for 50 Sadhus, though as a rule only one Fakir or Sadhu lives in each.[4] About 50 Hindu Sadhus live in the neighbouring villages of Balwa and Khurswal where the Panth has property in land.[5]

At Maghar there are more Muhammadan than Hindu Kabir Panthis. The two sections have little in common, except their devotion to Kabir their Master. Each section receives PRASAD in its own Math.

In connexion with the Muhammadan Math a largely attended Mela is held on the last day of Aghan (November). In connexion with this Mela a sacred feast is held. The

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[2] From 1300 to 1567 A.D. Maghar was the capital of the Samet Rajputs.

[3] It is stated in the *Basti Gazetteer* that a Hindu Mahant first arrived at Maghar in 1764 A.D. According to Kabir Chaura traditions the first four Mahants were buried at Maghar. See Additional Note.

[4] The Hindu Math is under the management of the Kabir Chaura Mahant. The present Mahant, Gur Prasad Dass, is specially interested in the superintendence of agricultural operations. In the absence of the Mahant the Pujari is placed in charge of the Kabir Chaura Math.

[5] This land is chiefly under rice cultivation. In 1900 the land at Balwa supplied the Kabir Chaura Math with 750 maunds of rice and the Maghar Math with 500 maunds.

Mahant proceeds to the shrine, followed by the Diwan, carrying in both hands a large dish (THAMBE) containing KHICHRI (cooked rice mixed with DAL) and by a BANDALI carrying an earthenware vessel (KARWA) containing water and covered over with a white cloth. Upon reaching the shrine these vessels are placed upon the ground and frankincense is burnt upon the tomb, in a fire of cowdung.[6] The Mahant repeats certain prayers in which all present take their part.[7]

At the conclusion of the prayers he takes his seat upon the ground while the Diwan gives to each of the worshippers a small portion of the KHICHRI and the BANDALI pours from the spout of the KARWA a few drops of the water into the palm of their hands. When all have received, the Diwan and Bandali consume what is left. More prayers are said, after which the Mahant departs and the gathering breaks up.[8]

Pilgrims to the shrine are expected to present a rupee to the officer in charge and also an offering of rice and DAL. They receive in return a small portion of KHICHRI and a pinch of the ashes that result from the burning of the frankincense and cowdung.[9]

The Kabir Chaura Math receives its name from the fact that it occupies the site upon which according to tradition Kabir gave instruction to his disciples. The Math consists of two courtyards, connected by a bridge thrown across a narrow lane. The main courtyard contains the preaching platform, the MANDAR, which is occupied by a pair of wooden sandals (KHANRAON)

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6 These ashes are passed through fine muslin and preserved in a brass LOTA.

7 The Kabir Panthis apply the term prayer to devotional exercises which might be more accurately described as meditations.

8 It seemed best to describe this feast here and so complete the account relating to Maghar. The religious feasts of the Hindu Kabir Panthis, which are conducted with considerably more ritual, are described in Chapter VI.

9 The Muhammadan members of the Panth wear caps of a different shape to those worn by the Hindu Bairagis.

intended to represent the feet of the Guru,[10] the GADDI,[11] the SAMADHS (tombs)[12] of five Mahants and quarters for Sadhus. The courtyard across the lane which occupies the traditional site of Niru's house is made over to the female Bairagis, known as MAI LOG.[13] This court contains the Samadhs of three Mahants.

The room in which the Gaddi is placed is immediately opposite the entrance gate. Over the Gaddi hangs the picture of Kabir. In this picture Surat Gopal and Dharm Dass, the founders of the two main divisions of the Panth, are represented as kneeling before Kabir while Kamal stands behind with a fan in his hand. On one side of the picture hangs a portrait of Ramanand and on the other a picture of Rangi Dass, the late Mahant, who died eight years ago.

Above the pictures are hung what appear from the distance to be armorial bearings, but are in reality designs in coloured cloth, intended to symbolise the five elements (earth, air, fire, water and AKHAS) and the nine doors or points of entrance into the human body. In front of the Gaddi are placed two flower vases and upon the wall at the side hangs a rosary, composed of a thousand beads, which is reserved for the use of the Mahant.

[10] Originally there was no Mandar (temple) at Kabir Chaura, but in this respect, as probably in others, the Kabir Panthis have gradually assimilated their own arrangements to those of the Maths of other relgious odes. The DASNAMIS worship the feet of Sankaracharya, carved in outline in stone or marble. It was probably in order to escape the charge of idolatry that the Kabir Panthis substituted for the CHARAN PADUKA a pair of wooden sandals.

[11] The GADDI is literally the pillow upon which the Guru sits in state. The GADDI of this Math belongs to Kabir, his representative upon earth sits behind and not upon it.

[12] When practicable the Mahants are buried within the precincts of their Math. It is the custom of this, as of several other religious orders, to bury and not burn the bodies of their dead. The custom which may be due to Muhammadan influences is explained by saying that the bodies of Sants who have died to the world have already been purified and do not require the cleansing of fire.

[13] The female devotees are given the title of Mother because all Sadhus are required to treat them with the respect due to a mother from her son. When a married man is received into the order of the DANDIS he applies his lips to the breast of his wife to indicate that henceforth he stands to her in the relation of son to mother.

Daily service is conducted in the Math, morning and evening, by the PUJARI. In the morning the Sadhus, so soon as they have bathed, assemble in front of the Mandar. Here takes place the first part of the service which includes the performance of ARTI,[14] and the washing of the Guru's feet. After this, the various Samadhs and the Gaddi are visited and the Sadhus return to the Mandar for the concluding portion of the service. The morning service is said to occupy thirty minutes and the evening service an hour.

The water in which the wooden sandals have been washed, known as *Charanamrita,* is poured into a brazen vessel. Three teaspoonfuls of this water together with three TULSI[15] leaves, are given to all who visit the Math during the day. At 8 p.m. the doors of the Math are closed and any *Charanamrita* that remains over is offered in the first place to such Sadhus as have not previously received it. The vessel is then presented to the Mahant who after drinking what remains rinses out the vessel with fresh water and cansumes that also.

An annual Mela which lasts over four or five days is held at this Math in the month of January. On this occasion the large courtyard is crowded with devotees. Those who wish to become Bairagis observe a fast for twelve days, eating in the evening a little GUR (crude sugar) and rice cooked in milk. These candidates are admitted as Bairagis at the celebration of the Jot Pershad, which, from a religious point of view, constitutes the principal purpose of the Mela.[16] Of the possessions belonging to the Math the Kabir Panthis regard the TOPI (cap) and SEHLI woollen necklace of Kabir, the KHANRAON, the picture of Kabir and the BIJAK as those of greatest value.

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[14] In Arti fire, usually the flames of burning camphor, is waved before the object of worship.

[15] The Tulsi leaf is sacred to Vishnu. Many Kabir Panthis feel that in thus showing reference to Vishnu they are disregarding the teaching of Kabir, as by Ram he meant not the incarnation of Vishnu, but the Supreme Deity.

[16] It is said that the JOT PERSHAD was originally celebrated in this Math once a month, but that this custom was discontinued on account of a quarrel that arose between Puran Dass and the contemporary Mahant of the Dharm Dass section, in consequence of which the latter refused to supply Puran Dass with something which was regarded as essential for the proper conduct of this service. For an account of the Jot Pershad see Chapter VI.

The principal officers of the Math are the MAHANT, the DIWAN, the KOTWAL and the PUJARI. The Mahant is responsible for the general arrangements and should be a man of learning, qualified to give religious instruction; the DIWAN is the business manager; the KOTAL is responsible for the maintenance of discipline, while the PUJARI conducts the PUJA (worship) and keeps clean and in order the Mandar and the Gaddi.

The headquarters of the Dharm Dass section were originally at Bandogarh in the neighbourhood of Jubbulpore; from this place they were transferred to Koodarmal and once again in recent years to Dhama Khera.

Dharm Dass, the founder of this section, is said to have first met Kabir at Banares and to have been rebuked by him for worshpping idols. He met him subsequently at Brindaban, but failing to recognise him said, "Your words resemble those addressed to me by a Sadhu whom I once met at Banaras." On this occasion Kabir adopted stronger measures and threw into the river the idol which Dharm Dass was worshipping. Once more Kabir appeared to him in his house at Bandogarh. Dharm Dass was a BUNNIAH by caste and possessed of considerable wealth. Kabir again rebuked him for practising idolatry and asked him how he could worship an idol made out of the same stone as the weights which he made use of in his business. On this occasion Dharm Dass acknowledged the force of his arguments and both he and his wife became his disciples. According to the account given in SUKRIT DHYAN Dharm Dass was the son of one Mahesh, and was as an infant saved from death by Gyani (*i.e.* Kabir) who entered into his body. He was originally called Judawan, but objected to this name and received from Kabir permission to change it to Dharm Dass. Narayan Dass, his son, refused to accept Kabir as his Guru, but through the grace of Kabir a second son was born in 1516 and named Churaman.[17] This son was installed upon the

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[17] This date has apparently been chosen to bring the birth of Churaman within the lifetime of Kabir. No mention is made of the

Gaddi by Kabir himself. Upon the occasion of his installation Kabir foretold that his descendants should sit upon the Gaddi for 42 generations (BANS), and declared that the right to communicate the MANTRA would be confined to his descendants. In accordance with Kabir's instructions the Head Mahant of this section marries and lives with his wife till a son is born. After the birth of the son the wife becomes a BAIRAGI. The Mahant holds office for a period of 25 years and 20 days and is then succeeded by his son.[18] In one case the son is said to have died and as the mother had become a BAIRAGI the Mahant lived with another woman by whom he had a son.[19] The father of the present Mahant died after holding office for a period of three years only, and many wished that one of his disciples, Jugla Nand, should officiate as Mahant during the remainder of his term of office. To this proposal the majority of the members strongly objected on the ground that he was not a descendant of Dharm Dass, and Ugranam was duly installed. His grandmother, known as Dadi Sahib, who was responsible for this proposal, still exercises authority at Koodarmal, and Ugranam reigns in the newly established Math at Dhama Khera. Jugla Nand with other discontented Sadhus retired to Bombay, where he has published various books bearing upon the Panth. Kabir is said to have given instructions to Dharm Dass regarding the CHAUKA and the JOT PERSHAD.

The Kabir Panth exists as a protest against the religious exclusiveness of the twice-born castes. As a natural result few but Sudras whose cause it champions have associated them-

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age at which Churaman was installed as Mahant. No importance can be attached to dates mentioned in connexion with the establishment of the Panth. Ugranam is said to be the 13th Mahant. If eleven Mahants occupied the Gaddi for twenty years each and one Mahant for three, the Panth would appear to have been founded 278 years previous to the installation of Ugranam, *i.e.* about 1625.

18 The Mahant's son alone is a member of the Panth by birth and is initiated by his father. All other members become the children of the Mahant through the reception of the MANTRA.

19. The boy who died is said to have been Churaman who returned to the world, but retired after a short stay as he was unwilling a second time to sit upon the GADDI.

selves with the movement. The Panth contends for a truth which forms part of the Gospel of Creation, viz. that all men have spiritual powers which should find their natural expression in communion with God, now in this life.[20]

The sons of the twice-born as they come to years of discretion are invested with the sacred thread (JANEO) and reminded thereby of their spiritual privileges and responsiblities. The members of this Panth wear round their necks a KANTHI (rosary) formed of beads made of Tulsi wood.[21] This KANTHI is naturally associated with thoughts of prayer and in this way reminds those who wear it alike of their relation to God and of the promises which they made at the time of their initiation.[22] Permission to wear a KANTHI is granted to women as well as to men, for they too are spiritual beings; but no woman may assume a KANTHI previous to marriage, nor may she become the disciple of her husband's Guru.[23]

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[20] The exclusive spirit which finds expression in caste and against which Kabir and others fought, has by no means been expelled from the minds of KABIR PANTHIS. Members of the lowest castes, such as Mehtars. Doms and Dhobis, should, they consider, join sects such as that of SHIVA NARAYAN and not be permitted to wear KANTHIS.

[21] The KANTHI of the KABIR PANTHIS is formed of beads made of Tulsi wood, which are usually strung on string of very inferior quality. This defect may result in the loss of the beads, and no member of the Panth is under such circumstance allowed to worship or eat food till the beads have been replaced. They are, however, allowed to wear instead of the KANTHI one large bead (HIRA) strung on substantial thread. Those who live in places where a lost KANTHI cannot be easily replaced usually avail themselves of this alternative. Some KANTHIS are made of material other than wood, *e.g.* grass or cocoanut fibre. Some SATNAMIS wear a wristlet made of string in lieu of a KANTHI.

[22] Prayer as offered by the KABIR PANTHIS is of an elementary character. One says that they pray that they may obtain salvation (MUKHTI); another says that he sings the praises of Narayan in the morning and in the evening prays for protection against evil spirits. The latter spoke of our Church Services as "practice" and regarded them as valuable in as much as they helped to form a habit of punctuality. It would be a great mistake to suppose that prayer means for a KABIR PANTHI the same as it does for a Christian.

At the time of prayer members of the Panth make on their forehead the mark (TILAK) of Vishnu, using for the purpose a special kind of earth mixed with water or with water only.

To Brahmins at the time of investiture with the sacred thread is communicated the Brahminical MANTRA which they are not allowed on any account to communicate to those who are not Brahmins.[24] In like manner at the time of initiation a MANTRA is whispered into the ear of Kabir Panthis. This MANTRA serves as a bond of union between members of the Panth and also suggests a position of privilege.[25]

Brahmins wear upon their forehead the sign of the God whom they worship. Kabir Panthis also wear such a mark (TIKA).

In the days of Kabir a knowledge of religious truth was practically confined to those who were acquainted with one or other of the two sacred languages, Arabic and Sanskrit. These two languages were employed both in public and private worship with the result that the worship of the masses was too often a mere repetition of phrases which were unintelligible to those who used them. Kabir urged that religious books should also be written in the vernacular that all might obtain that knowledge of God which was essential to spiritual progress.

Again to the illiterate masses teaching contained in books

[23] If disciples of the same Guru they would be regarded as brother and sister and so their marriage would become unlawful. This, however, appears to be a later refinement as Dharm Dass and his wife were both disciples of Kabir. They would probably argue that this was a matter of necessity, as at that time there was only one Guru whereas in modern days there are many.

[24] The spiritual life of Brahmins, Kshattriyas and Vaishyas is recognised from the time when they receive the MANTRA from their Guru and are invested with the sacred thread. From that time they ae subject to the rules of caste. Only those who have reached years of discretion are admitted as members of the PANTH with the possible exception of children, both of whose parents are aleady members.

[25] The Initiatory Mantra of the Kabir Panth is said to contain five words which represent one name or revelation of the one true God. Should the CHELA at the time of initiation fail to catch the words on account of nervousness or the noise of music, he may have it repeated to him by some other member of the Panth, provided that this is done in a solitary place where there is no chance of the words being overheard by others.

was inaccessible, and so it is that we find Kabir laying great stress on the importance of oral teaching. Few men are qualified to become scholars, but all are required to be good: therefore he urged his disciples to associate with good men and through conversation with them to acquire such knowledge as is necessary. The study of books, he thought, was too often productive of pride; to display learning and intelligence scholars were often tempted to enlarge upon topics of little spiritual value, while in private conversation heart speaks to heart of its own spiritual needs. Such were the views of Kabir and in consequence the Guru in this Panth occupies a position of extraordinary importance.

Kabir was a poet of no mean order and gladly consecrated his literary gifts to the service of God. He knew that religious instruction given in the form of poetry was easily remembered; he knew too that the singing of BHAJANS (Hymns) was an occupation in which the people of India took peculiar pleasure. It only remained for him to compose hymns which his followers could sing. This he did, and up to the present day his hymns enjoy great popularity with the people and in the Panth occupy a prominent position in all acts of public worship.

As the Brahmins are required to repeat the Gyatri daily, so are members of this Panth required to use the following hymns, in the morning and evening respectively:

Morning Hymn : Kabir said—Spiritual and material blessings attend those who wait upon the Darwesh; their account is safe. Love of you pervades the whole body of your devotees. You are starvation, unmoved by desire, a mendicant. You walk in no one's footsteps, you seek ease in no abode. The whole universe is your body. You are boundless (a stream without banks). You pervade the Universe constantly. The love which you cause is profound. The empty Universe is in me, says the Guru (Kabir). If we do honour by fire to the true name, the body becomes pure. Dharam Dass taking the Guru's arm walked and found Kabir.

Evening Hymn : Evening having come on, the day having closed, the duck broke into wailing: "O drake, let us go to that country where Day and Night are unknown." If separation takes place at night, the duck is to be met with in the morning, but he who is separated from the name (of God) regains it neither during day nor night. Hear, O Guru, Treasury of kindness, I beseech you with clasped hands. Mercy, humility, devotion, equality, good nature, constancy, these are the ornaments of a devotee. Devotion to the one without beginning is adornment. The only name, the only Guru, is Kabir, the highest PIR.[26]

Anxious as Kabir was to claim for all men spiritual privileges he was no less anxious to impress upon those who desired to become religious that they must live in a way consistent with their profession.

All, therefore, who desire to become members of the PANTH are required to renounce polytheism and to acknowledge their belief in one only God (PARAMESWAR). They must also promise to eat no meat and drink no wine; to bathe daily and sing hymns to God, both morning and evening; to forgive those who trespass against them up to three times; to avoid the company of all women of bad character and all unseemly jesting in connexion with such subjects; never to turn away from their house their lawful wife; never to tell lies; never to conceal the property of another man; never to bear false witness against a neighbour or speak evil of another on hearsay evidence.[27]

One prominent trait in Hindu character, viz. personal devotion, finds ample scope for exercise in the devotion to their Guru required of all members of the Panth. All who wish to approach God must, they say, become the disciple of some Guru and to this Guru when once chosen, the disciple must wholly submit himself, mind, soul and body. To Kabir, as the chief Guru, many of the BHAJANS used in public worship are addressed, and marked reverence is also shown to the living Guru as God's representative upon earth.

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[26] For these BHAJANS in their original form see Crooke's *Tribes and Castes of N.-W.P. and Oudh*, Vol. III pp. 75-6. For the translation in the text I am indebted to a resident of Cawnpore who locally enjoys a reputation as a Hindi poet.

[27] In requiring such promises from his followers Kabir doubtless indicates those defects in Hindu social life which to him appeared most detrimental to the development of religion. To the promise to eat no meat the greatest importance is attached in all the Vaishnavite sects, as such a habit is supposed to develop the material and injure the spiritual part of human nature. This belief with reference to eating flesh makes them slow to realise that Christianity, which regards such questions as matters of indifference, can be really a spiritual force

CHAPTER VI.

THE KABIR PANTH

II

This Panth, like other religious institutions of the kind, is founded on a double basis. Members may live as householders in their own homes, or renounce the world and attach themselves permanently to one of the Monasteries belonging to the order. Those belonging to the latter class are known as Bairagis. A married man may leave his wife, whom he is henceforth to regard as his mother, and become a Bairagi, provided that that he is the father of at least one son. Women, as well as men, may become Bairagis, if found properly qualified after a probationary period of two years.[1] Conventual buildings exist both at Kabir Chaura and Maghar. The householders perform an important function in the economy of the order, inasmuch as they contribute largely to the support of the Bairagis.

There are a large number of branch establishments, each of which is presided over by a Mahant who spends most of his time in travelling round to visit the disciples who acknowledge him as their GURU.[2] He is supposed to visit his CHELAS at least once a year, to note the progress they have made, to give instruction to them and to their families, and to examine and to receive into the order, if found qualified, such candidates as may be brought to him. On such occasions he is entertained by members of the Panth and also provided with travelling expenses.

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[1] Female Bairagis are usually widows or the wives of men who have become Bairagis. At Maghar there are said to be about 25 female Bairagis.

[2] The Mahants are not allowed to shave; the Bairagis must either shave entirely or not at all.

The Mahants of the branch establishments receive authority to teach and initiate new members from the Head Mahant of the section to which they belong. At the time of appointment they are given to eat a betel leaf (BIRA)[3] as a pledge that they undertake faithfully to perform the duties of their office.[4] Each Mahant receives a document, bearing the seal of the Head Mahant, and known as the PANJA PARWANA. Upon this document are entered the names of all disciples admitted by him into the order. The Mahant is required to check this list at each place that he visits and to present it annually to the Head Mahant both for inspection and the entry of new names.[5]

As signs of authority the Mahant receives a red TOPI, a necklace of black wool, known as SELI,[6] and a special rosary known as the PANCH MAL.

On the occasion of his annual visit to Headquarters the Mahant is required to present twelve cocoanuts and twelve rupees on his own account and one cocoanut and one rupee for each new name that he wishes to have entered on his Parwana. He also makes over to the Diwan all offerings made at the CHAUKA ARTI services at which he has officiated during the year.

A Mahant upon appointment is required to make an offering of cocoanuts. Kabir Panthis explain the peculiar siginficance attached to cocoanuts in the Panth in the light of the following facts: (1) it has a face resembling that of a man, (2) its surface is divided into three parts recalling Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu, (3) its flesh is formed gradually as human flesh is formed, and (4) it differs from other fruits in containing no seed.[7] The breaking of the cocoanut is regarded as a bloodless sacrifice, a peace offering presented to Niranjan to secure for members of the Panth admission into heaven.

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[3] In ancient days a PAN leaf (BIRA) was thrown down as a challenge. This custom is referred to in the *Ramayana*.

[4] One of the Mahants at Lucknow assumed office when 14 years of age. Normally when a minor is nominated for succession an unbeneficed Mahant is associated with him in office, till he is able to perform the duties unassisted.

[5] On the occasion of a visit to any place the Mahant recites at celebration of the CHAUKA ARTI all the names entered either upon his own PARWANA or those of his predecessors in office, and writes the words 'CHALANA KAR GAYA' against the names of any who have died. In the case of a deceased Mahant the phrase used is 'SAMADHI LE LI'.

[6] The SELI is very similar to that worn by certain followers of Nanak. In each case there are five tassels attached to the SELI. In the Kabir Panth SELI there are three tassels placed together in the centre with one on either side; in the Nanak SELI the five tassels are placed at regular intervals.

The ordinary Mahants are not men of great learning, though they have usually committed to memory a certain number of sayings attributed to Kabir and possibly also some book of which they have managed to secure a copy. Want of learning is in some sort atoned for in the opinion of their followers by a detailed knowledge of the ritual to be observed in the performance of religious ceremonies. The more learned Mahants have generally some knowledge of Tulsi Dass's *Ramayan* and the *Bhagawad Gita.*

Before giving an account of the ceremony of initiation and the two sacramental meals, the CHAUKA ARTI and the JOT PERSHAD, it seems best to explain two terms which are especially associated with the initiation ceremony and the JOT PERSHAD. The two terms in question are CHARANAMRITA and PARWANA.

CHARANAMRITA, the AMRITA of the feet, is the name given to the water in which have been washed the feet of the Head Mahant, Kabir's representative upon earth. This water is mixed with fine earth and then made up into pills. These pills may either be swallowed whole, or pounded up, mixed with water and drunk.

PARWANA (passport) is the name given to the betel leaf specially prepared at head quarters at the time of a celebration of the JOT PERSHAD. A pile of betel leaves, sixteen handbreadths in height is arranged upon the ground. At night time a pewter saucer is placed upon a specially prepared spot and the dew collected in this vessel is known as AMAR, water derived from heaven direct. In the morning the Mahant meditates in front of the pile of betel leaves and with the AMAR writes upon the topmost leaves the sacred name of God. The betel leaves thus consecrated are made up into small portions, about a quarter of an inch square, and distributed among the Mahants for use at a celebration of the JOT PERSHAD or for presentation to a candidate at the time of his initiation. The PARWANA is said to represent the body of Kabir.

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[7] Do they wish to imply that the cocoanut represents God made man, the word become flesh?

The ceremony of initiation is one of considerable solemnity. The candidate in the presence of the Guru and other members of the PANTH makes the required promises and is solemnly warned as to the consequences for good or evil that will depend upon the way in which he afterwards observes them.[8] While BHAJANS are being sung by those present half of the MANTRA is whispered into the left ear of the candidate by the Guru, who afterwards places in his two outstretched hands, placed together, some grass, PAN leaves and white flowers. A Bairagi, taking a brass vessel containing water in one hand, with the other leads the candidate to another quarter of the room where he allows the grass, etc. to fall upon the ground. Having moved a short way from that spot the candidate again places his hands together and into them the Bairagi pours water from the vessel. With the first handful of water he rinses out his mouth; with the second he washes his face. After this the candidate is led back to the Guru. The Guru takes up a KANTHI and makes it over to a Bairagi who takes it round the assembly and presents it to all members of the Panth in turn. All touch it with their hands and it is then returned by the Bairagi to the Mahant.[9] The Mahant placing the KANTHI in his open hands does obeisance to the Gaddi and then stretching it between the thumb and first finger of both hands lets it fall over the head on to the neck of the candidate, as he kneels before him.[10] At the conclusion of this ceremony he whispers the whole MANTRA in the right ear of the candidate.[11] So soon as the MANTRA has been communicated the new disciple is warned that he must on no account eat the fruit of the fig tree (GULAR). In reply to inquiries as to the reason for this prohibition, he is told that the fruit contains many flies and cannot therefore be eaten without much destruction of life. From amongst the articles of food that have been placed beneath a clean cloth the Guru then takes a cocoanut and places it in the two hands of the candidate who touches with the fruit his right shoulder, his breast and forehead and returns it to the Guru with a fee of one rupee. The Guru, having washed the cocoanut with betel leaves dipped in water, breaks it upon a stone. He proceeds with a knife to cut up the flesh of the cocoanut into small portions and deposits them in an open dish. He next pours into the hands of the candidate some CHARANAMRITA which he reverently drinks. The Mahant then takes a PAN leaf and placing upon it a PARWANA, a portion of cocoanut, some BATASA, GUR,[12] raisins and currants, deposits it in the outstretched hands of the candidate who transfers it to his mouth. After the candidate has in this way been received into the Panth all members present receive at the hands of the Guru a betel leaf upon which is placed a portion of the cocoanut, some BATASA, GUR, raisins and currants. No portion of the cocoanut may be destroyed or eaten by those who are not members of the PANTH.[13] Any portion that remains over is carefully preserved by the Guru and given to PANTHIS in other places that he may visit, with a statement as to the name and residence of the new disciple at whose initiation it was offered. This ceremony is followed by a feast, in which members of other religious sects are also permitted to take part. Reverence is paid to the Guru and Parameshwar and many BHAJANS are sung in honour of Parameshwar and Kabir.

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[8] Most members fear to violate promises made in so solemn a manner, lest the wrath of God should fall upon them. It is said that one, a seller of oil, drank some wine and ate some flesh. He was expelled from the Panth and immediately fell ill. After six months he recovered and was readmitted into the Panth, but after an interval of a year he repeated his offence and died in consequence. Another member who committted a similar offence is said to have lost the use of a hand.

[9] This process is known as GAWAHI (witness).

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[10] None but a Mahant may invest anyone with the Kanthi of the order. A Kanpur Mahant once fell into the hands of the police who at once destroyed his kanthi. As soon as the Mahant recovered his freedom he invested himself with a second kanthi. This irregularity was at once reported to the Head Mahant and the offender and another member of the Panth who was supposed to have connived at his offence, were immediately excommunicated.

[11] In the Kabir Chaura section only one mantra is communicated to the candidate, viz. the Guru Mantra. In the Dharam Dass section two mantras are communicated at the time of initiation, the Guru Mantra and the Tinka Arpan mantra, and three more subsequently in response to inquiry, viz. the Panch Nam, the Sat Nam and Har Nam. The Guru Mantra in use in the two sections is said to be different in form. In the Kabir Chaura section any reference to Dharam Dass is avoided as far as possible.

[12] Batasa is a small sugary wafer in common use at religious gatherings; GUR is a preparation of sugar.

This ceremony which in a measure corresponds to Christian Baptism is known as TINKA ARPAN. In the Dharm Dass section the candidate presents one cocoanut only and one money offering which must not be less than one rupee. In the Kabir Chaura section candidates are required to present no less than sixteen cocoanuts, since they say sixteen sons (SUT) were begotten of the Word, and with each cocoanut an offering of money which must not be less than four annas.[14] There is another important difference in the practice of the two sections. In the Dharm Dass section this ceremony TINKA ARPAN, may never be repeated, whereas in the Kabir Chaura section it is performed twice, once by the candidate's personal Guru and again by the Head Mahant in the Kabir Chaura MATH. This difference may in part be accounted for by the fact that the Mahants of the Kabir Chaura section are not supplied with a PARWANA and also by the fact that in this section any Bairagi is authorised to initiate new members.

Every member of the PANTH is required to supply the material wants of his Guru to the best of his ability, and also to pray on his behalf. As on account of such material help the Guru is benefited by an increase in the number of his chelas, he is not himself allowed to invite others to become members of the PANTH.

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[13] A corresponding ceremony exists among other sects but different fruits are used, e.g. the followers of Tulsi Dass partake of a plantain. One plantain only is used for this purpose. If many members are present, it is mixed with other food till the quantity is sufficient. The RAMANANDIS eat the leaf of the Tulsi plant.

[14] Of the sixteen cocoanuts four are broken at the TINKA ARPAN ceremony, six are sent to Maghar, and three are broken at each of the two Chauka Arti ceremonies in the months of Phagun and Bhadon.

As regards discipline, any disciple who brings discredit on the Panth by irregularity of life or who in other ways offends against the traditions of the order is in the first place censured by his Guru and subsequently, should he refuse to listen to advice, excluded from all religious gatherings. His company is avoided by other members of the Panth and his salutations disregarded by the Guru.

The ordinary members of the PANTH believe that the souls of PANTHIS after death enter Heaven (BAIKANTH) or Hell (NARAK) and there remain till they have been sufficiently rewarded or punished for deeds done in the body. They then return to earth, but always apparently clothed in a human body. This sucession of lives continues till the soul freed from desire becomes absorbed in God. A member of the PANTH quoted to me the following saying attributed to Nanak: "We want neither BAIKANTH nor NARAK, but true life (PURI ZINDAGI), and that is obtained when there are no more links with this earth."[15]

Members of the KABIR PANTH are encouraged to observe every Sunday as well as the last day of the lunar month (PURAN MASI) as a day of fasting, and having bathed to assemble at 8 o'clock in the evening to join in a service, known as CHAUKA,[16] which takes the form of a religious meal.[17] A piece of ground measuring either 5 or 7 yards square is specially prepared and cleaned. In the centre of this square is measured out a smaller space, 2½ yards square. This inner square is covered over with flour, and in its centre are placed some flowers[18] immediately in front of the service book (PUNO GRANTH). The Mahant sits in the enclosure, facing the congregation, with the service book before him. On his right hand within the smaller square are placed, (i) a small metal box containing CHARANAMRITA and PARWANA, (ii) a dish containing 125 betel leaves[19] arranged around the edge with a single leaf in the centre on which is placed a piece of camphor, and (iii) a pillar composed of dough, constructed with a hollow top, in the centre of which is placed a stick enveloped in cotton wool. During the service GHI is poured over this stick which is then lighted and serves as a candle throughout the ceremony. On the left hand of the Mahant are placed (i) a dish containing BATASA and GUR, (ii) a cocoanut and (iii) a brazen vessel (KHALSA) containing water.

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[15] We may possibly in this belief see traces of Muhammadan or Christian teaching.

[16] CHAUKA is the term applied to the portion of ground specially prepared for the consumption of food. The ground is divided up into squares, each one of which is occupied by one person.

[17] All who attend the Chauka observe a fast throughout the preceding day, but are allowed to drink water or water sweetened with sugar, if they find their thirst oppressive. The majority of those who belong to the Panth are content to perform their devotions at home on Sundays and in this case only keep the fast up to midday. The FULL Chauka service, followed by a meal as described below is only performed of necessity on two occasions in the year, in the months of PHAGUN and BHADON, which roughly correspond to March and August. On these occasions the Mahant himself is necessarily present and all members are required to attend. Observance of the whole day fast is a necessary condition of attendance at a Chauka whether the Mahant is present or not.

At each corner of the inner portion of the CHAUKA is placed a small earthenware jar containing water; on this jar rests an earthenware plate containing grain, and over this is placed a lamp (CHIRAGH) fed with linseed oil.[20]

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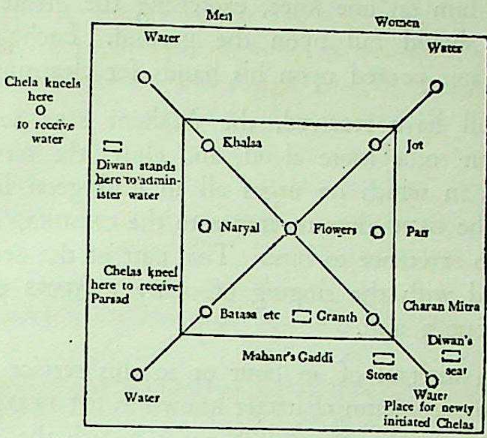
[18] This specially prepared ground is covered over with an awning (CHANDWA). The colour of the awning, as well as that of the flowers, is white on festal occasions; red when the service is held in memory of the dead. In addition to the flowers that lie upon the CHAUKA a bunch of flowers is suspended from the centre of the awning.

The Chauka is arranged by the Mahant. When he is not present the central portion is not overlaid with flour; there is no box containing CHARANAMRITA and PARWANA; in the place of the dough-made candlestick is placed a dish on which camphor is burnt, the water is placed in an ordinary LOTA and not in a KHALSA; for the whole cocoanut are substituted fragments of cocoanut bought in the bazar.

The flour in the centre of the inner portion of the Chauka is fashioned to represent nine lotus flowers arranged in a circle. Upon these, which represent the sun, moon and seven planets rest the natural flowers.

[19] To eat a betel leaf on such occasions is equivalent to taking a vow to loyally observe the rules laid down. The Mahant removes to his own lodgings any betel leaves that may be over from the Chauka service, but may only eat them himself or give them to another member of the Panth.


Men
Women
Water
Water
Chela kneels here to receive water
Diwan stands here to administer water
Khalsa
Jot
Naryal
Flowers
Pan
Chelas kneel here to receive Parsad
Charan Mitra
Batasa etc
Granth
Diwan's seat
Mahant's Gaddi
Stone
Water
Water
Place for newly initiated Chelas

The Mahant, at the conclusion of the service, which he reads out of the book, lights the candle which stands in the centre of the candlestick made of dough. He next lights a piece of camphor on a stone that is set beside him and taking the cocoanut pours water over it and then breaks it upon the stone,[21] and finally lights the piece of camphor in the centre of the PAN dish and while the camphor is burning waves it backwards and forwards (ARTI.) The dish is then passed round and those present place in it a small offering. These offerings are taken by the Mahant for the use of his MATH. He then takes half of the flesh of the cocoanut and with a penknife cuts it up into small portions which he places on a pewter plate. All present approach the Mahant in turn[22] and receive into the palm of their right hand a betel leaf, a fragment of cocoanut, a little GUR and some BATASA. This they eat as they kneel before him on one knee, exercising the greatest care lest any portion should fall upon the ground. Each man as he retires has water poured upon his hands for cleansing purposes.

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[20] The grain in the plate is to absorb any oil that may fall from the lamp and so preserve the purity of the water. There is a similar arrangement in the case of the Khalsa. The water in the earthenware vessels is used should the supply of water in the Khalsa (a large round brazen vessel) prove insufficient.

[21] The shell of the cocoanut represents Shaitan (KAL) who wishes to keep from men the blessing contained in the milk and milk-formed flesh of the fruit.

[22] On great occasions there may be as many as 200 present, men and women. The men sit on one side and the women on the other facing the Mahant, but come up in any order to receive the PRASAD. It is said that about a fourth of those present at the Chauka service receive the JOT PERSHAD.

When all have received, the Mahant says some prayers privately, then some more aloud, and closes the service with a short address in which he urges all to lead good lives. After the address the GURU does reverence to the CHAUKA, after which all present do reverence to him. This part of the service which is interspersed with the singing of many BHAJANS usually concludes at about 3 a.m.

After an interval of an hour or so this service is followed by one of a more solemn character known as JOT PERSHAD.[23] The Mahant's servant takes the dough out of which the candle-stand was formed and mixing with it additional flour, GHI and fragments of cocoanut, with the help of others kneeds it up again and makes it over to the Mahant. Out of this dough the Mahant makes a number of small wafers, (PURI), measuring about two inches in diameter. When these have been prepared he calls aloud that JOT PERSHAD is ready, and all return to their places. The Mahant reads a short address, after which an interval is left for private prayer or meditation. All who feel themselves unworthy to proceed further with the service then retire to a distance. Those who remain approach in turn the Guru and placing their hands together receive into the palm of the right hand which is uppermost a small pill of CHARANAMRITA and a portion of PARWANA, and this disposed of receive into the same hand one of the wafers. They then draw near to the Diwan, who from a brazen vessel pours into the palm of their right hand a few drops of water which they drink. After this they retire to a distance and an attendant pours water over both their hands to cleanse them from contact with their lips. This food is regarded as Kabir's special gift and it is said that all who receive it worthily will obtain eternal life.

This service is followed by a substantial meal, which is paid for by subscription, should no wealthy member of the Panth have come forward to defray the cost.[24]

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[23] JOT, the flame of a candle; PERSHAD, consecrated food.

After listening to this account of the service I inquired of the Mahant as to the fate of those who abstained from receiving the gifts of Kabir. He replied that all men on their deathbed could receive from their Mahant PRASAD, CHARANAMRITA, and PARWANA and that in cases where the Mahant lived at a distance it was usual to place a certain amount of CHARANAMRITA and PARWANA with one or more of his Chelas who could be trusted to keep them safe from all pollution. Such supplies could be utilised at the close of a PURAN MASI CHAUKA, when a Mahant was not present, or in cases of serious illness. Every Mahant, he added, kept by him a certain amount of PRASAD, but he alone could administer or prepare this.

The Mahant explained further that it was only essential that the dying should receive CHARANAMRITA and PARWANA; the former testified to the Chela's utter devotion to Kabir, while the latter constituted his passport to the Guru's heavenly mansion.

Upon the death of a member of the PANTH two cocoanuts are imediately purchased. One of these is carried by the barber in the funeral procession and placed by the side of the dead body, immediately before cremation or burial;[25] the other is kept in the house and reserved as an offering at the funeral CHAUKA to be held at some subsequent date.

The arrangements in connexion with a Funeral Chauka differ from those of an ordinary Chauka in that the awning over the prepared ground is of red instead of white material, a piece of white cloth is placed over the CHAUKA to represent the dead man's body and the number of betel leaves is reduced to 124, the leaf removed representing the dead man's portion.

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[24] When a Mahant is not present these services are considerably curtailed, as the officiating chela is only provided with a service book containing a portion of the service, nor is he authorised to do all that a Mahant would do. Even when a Mahant is present the service on Sundays is only said in part and is usually brought to a close at midnight. The full service is read at PURAN MASI. One of my informants told me that there were generally between 30 and 40 present at the Chauka which he attended on Sundays.

A full CHAUKA service or Arti Prasad, followed by JOT PRASAD, can be held at any time, if some one is willing to defray all expenses, including the cost of the meal that follows in accordance with custom.

[25] The bodies of Bairagis are buried; those of house-holders, unless they have received BAIRAG, are usually cremated.

At the commencement of the service the Mahant prays silently on behalf of the deceased that he may be preserved from all dangers on his journey. Upon the conclusion of this prayer five funeral BHAJANS are sung, after which all present three times do BANDAGI to the Guru and to the piece of white cloth that represents the body of the deceased.

The cocoanut which has been specially reserved for this service is next washed by the Mahant and made over to some relative of the deceased or, should there be no relative belonging to the Panth, to some member attached to the same Guru as the deceased. This man after applying the cocoanut to his forehead, shoulders etc. returns it with an offering to the Mahant, who breaks it upon a stone upon which camphor is burning. The rest of the service is conducted in the manner already described. The number of cocoanuts offered varies from one to nine according to the means of the friends and relatives. Each cocoanut involves a separate offering to the Mahant. The flesh of the cocoanut or cocoanuts is made up with flour etc. into small cakes which are sent round to the houses of Kabir Panthis by the hands of Bairagis.

CHAPTER VII

THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS OF ISLAM

The various orders of Darweshes in Islam correspond in a measure to the Sects of Hinduism. An interesting account of these Orders will be found in *Essays on Islam* by Canon Sell. From this account it appears that two at least of these Orders were probably established in India previous to the time of Kabir; the Qadiriyah, founded in 1165, and the Qalandariyah, who were practically Sufis and founded in 1232.

The following details in the organisation of these Orders are worthy of attention in connexion with our subject:

(1) The extreme respect shown to the Superior of the Order.

"The head of an Order is the spiritual heir of its founder, and is called the Shaikh....He is looked up to with the greatest veneration; in fact absolute obedience to the Shaikh is the very essence of the system....The adoration of the Master too often takes the place of the worship of God, and the ideal life of a Darwesh is one which is absolute conformity to the will of the Shaikh. Thus, Thou shalt be in the hands of thy Shaikh as a corpse in the hands of those who prepare it for burial. God speaks to thee through him. Thou art his slave and thou canst do nothing without his order. He is a man chosen of God. Banish from thy heart any thought to which God or the Shaikh might object."

(2) Branch establishments (Zawiyah) under the control of a Muqaddim who must be implicitly obeyed by all members of the Order, living in the monastery.

(3) The spiritual guide is called a Pir (Hindu, Guru). The ordinary members of the Order are called Ikhwan (Brothers), Ashab (Companions), Murid (Disciples), or generically Darweshes.

(4) There are lay associates, not resident in the monasteries who are in possession of secret signs and words, by use of which they can obtain protection from the community. Lay associates also employ the rosary of the Order.

(5) Once or twice a year the Muqaddims meet in conference to consider questions relating to the well-being of the Order. This meeting is called Hazrat; of the use of Huzur as applied by Kabir Panthis to the Mahant at Headquarters.

(6) Novitiates are required to prepare themselves for admission into the Order by fasting, spiritual retreat, prayer and almsgiving.

(7) Newly admitted members are said to have entered upon the Tariqa (path, Panth).

(8) All members are required to repeat daily a special form of prayer (Zikr).

Hindu Monastic Orders had been previously formed in India by Sankaracharya, Ramanuja, Ramanand etc.

Nanak, a Hindu by birth, was frequently addressed as a Darwesh and associated much with Muhammadans.

Early Christian influences in Northern India

There have been Christians in Southern India from early days and it is quite possible that Hindu reformers, such as Sankaracharya and Ramanuja, came in contact with them. The former was possibly indebted to Christianity for some part of his reforming zeal, while Ramanuja and his disciple Ramanand[1] seem also to have been influenced by Christian teaching. From ancient times the more religiously disposed Hindus have been accustomed to visit places of pilgrimage in all parts of the country and when on pilgrimage to converse freely with all who enjoyed a reputation for spiritual enlightenment. Christian thought, in varying degrees of purity, may in this way have penetrated regions unvisited by professing Christians.[2]

The first Roman Catholic missionary to India of whose work we have any account was Friar Jordanus of the Dominican Order. He visited the east in 1321-3 and again in 1330. He mentioned Surat, Baroch and Quilon as places well suited to become centres of Missionary effort. The Inquisition, established at Goa in 1560, punished Muhammadans and other strangers who exercised their religion in the countries subject to the King of Portugal.[3] It is probably to the Inquisition that a Kabir Panthi refers when, in describing the evils which the Panth was intended to remedy, he writes that at one time religion was so little thought of that a strange people came from the West and made the observance of religious rites a criminal offence, punishable with death.

We do not as yet know much about the work of Christian missionaries in Northern India previous to 1570,[4] but we know that the Emperor Akbar in 1579 sent an envoy to the Viceroy of Goa, with a request that he would send to his court some Christian teachers, capable of holding controversy with Muhammadan Mullahs. In response to this request Father Rudolf Aquaviva and two others were despatched to the royal court at Fatehpur Sikri. Rudolf returned to Goa in 1583.[5] At the request of the same Emperor a second deputation, including Hieronymus Xavier a grand nephew of St. Francis Xavier, was sent to Lahore in 1595. For the instruction of non-Christians Father Xavier wrote several books; *Dastan Masih* (Life of Christ), *Dastan San Pedro* (Life of St. Peter), and *Aina Haqq numa* (The Mirror of Truth). *Dastan-i-Masih* was presented by him to Akbar at Agra in 1602 and subsequently published with a Latin translation by Ludovicus de Dieu in 1639. This work is described as "Historia Christi, sed contaminata." Xavier's work entitled *Aina Haqq numa* was published about 1608 and provoked a reply from Ahmad Ibn Zain to which he gave the name "The Divine rays in refutation of Christian error."[6] Dean Prideaux calls this book "The Brusher of the Glass" and Guadagnoli refers to it as *Politor Speculi*. Guadagnoli possibly made use of an Arabic version of the original Persian. The Jesuits were much alarmed at the appearance of this Muhammadan work and invited some one to answer it without delay. Bonaventura Malvasia, a Franciscan friar of Bononia, replied with *Dilucidatio Speculi verum monstrantis* in 1628 and Philip Guadagnoli wrote *Apologia pro Christiana religione* which was published in Latin at Rome in 1631 and translated into Arabic in 1637. This latter essay contained many appeals to Popes and Councils which would carry little weight with Muhammadan and Hindu readers.

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[1] In describing Ramanand as a disciple of Ramanuja I do not wish to imply that the two were contemporaneous. All that is certain is that Ramanand belonged originally to the School of Ramanuja.

[2] For further information on this subject see Dr. Grierson's lecture on *Modern Hinduism and its debt to the Nestorians.*

[3] See *The Syrian Church in India* by G. M. Rae pp. 187-8, 198.

[4] I am informed that Father Felix is engaged in collecting material for a book that should throw interesting light upon the work of the Roman Church in Northern India, including Kashmir and Tibet.

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[5] For further details about Father Rudolf's Mission, see *First Christian Mission to the Great Maghul,* by Father Goldie, published by Gill and Son, Dublin.

[6] I have had an opportunity of examining two interesting publications bearing upon the subject, viz. *Controversial Tracts on Christianity and Muhammadanism* by Henry Martyn, edited by Rev. S. Lee, Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge and published at the Cambridge University Press in 1824; and a work by Dean Prideaux of Norwich, first published in 1697 entitled *The true nature of imposture, fully displayed in the life of Mahomet.* This second work contains an interesting account of all books consulted by the author.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

List of the Kabir Chaura Mahants.

Name of Mahant	*Samadh at.*	*Years of office.*	*Approximate date of Installation.*
Shyam Dass	Maghar	28	1491?
Lal Dass	Maghar	22	1519?
Hari Dass	Maghar	18	1541?
Surat Gopal Dass	Jagannath	35	1559
Gyan Dass	Jagannath	25	1594
Sital Dass	Gaya	24	1619
Sukh Dass	Niru Tila	20	1643
Hulass Dass	Niru Tila	26	1663
Madho Dass	Niru Tila	20	1689
Kokil Dass	Niru Tila	21	1709
Ram Dass	Niru Tila	29	1730
Maha Dass	Niru Tila	22	1759
Hari Dass	Niru Tila	20	1781
Sukh Dass	Kabir Chaura	27	1801
Saran Dass	Kabir Chaura	16	1828
Puran Dass	Kabir Chaura	18	1844
Nirmal Dass	Kabir Chaura	22	1862
Ranghir Dass	Kabir Chaura	15	1884
Gur Prasad Dass		8	1899

The above list so far as the name of Mahant, place of Samadh and tenure of office are concerned was supplied by a Bairagi at Banaras.

The existence of the first three Mahants is highly problematical.

Surat Gopal (A.D. 1559) is generally regarded as the founder of the Panth. It is possible that he and the two Mahants who succeded him did not have their headquarters at Banaras, but that the Niru Tila compound was acquired during thee Mahanti of Sukh Dass. Bulwant Singh, and his son and successor, Cheit Sing, were patrons of the Kabir Panth

The former died in A.D. 1770. The Kabir Chaura Compound may have been acquired in their time.

Though seven Mahants are said to have been buried in the Niru Tila court of the Math at Banaras only three Samadhs are conspicuous at the present time. (see p. 69).

List of Dharam Dass Mahants

Name			*Approximate date of Installation*
Churamani	Nam	...	1694
Sudarshan	Nam	...	1714
Kulpati	Nam	...	1734.
Pramodh	Nam	Guru Bala Pir	1754
Kewal	Nam	...	1774
Amol	Nam	...	1794
Surat Sanehi	Nam	...	1814
Haqq	Nam	...	1834
Pak	Nam	...	1854
Praghat	Nam	...	1874
Dhiraj	Nam	...	1894
Ugra	Nam	...	1897
Daya	Nam		

The above have already appeared. Those to follow are:

Gridhmani Nam
Prakash Nam
Uditmani Nam
Mukundmani Nam
Adh Nam
Udai Nam
Gyan Nam
Hansmani Nam
Sukrit Nam
Agrmani Nam
Ras Nam
Gungmani Nam
Paras Nam
Jagrat Nam
Bhringhmani Nam

Akah Nam
Kanthmani Nam
Santokh Nam
Chatrik Nam
Dadhi Nam
Neh Nam
Adi Nam
Maha Nam
Nij Nam
Sahib Dass Nam
Udhawa Dass Nam
Karuna Nam
Uddhar Nam
Drigh Nam
Mahamani Nam

The dates have been calculated on the assumption that each Mahant held office for 20 years and 25 days, except Dhiraj Nam who is known to have died after three years tenure of office. One Mahant stated that the regular tenure of office was for 25 years and 20 days. On such a calculation the date of Churamani would be thrown back to A.D. 1654. In the Kabir Chaura section the average tenure of office has been for 23 years.

The Sukh Nidan is said to have been written during Pramodh Nam's tenure of office.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TEACHING OF THE PANTH

In considering the teaching of Kabir we confined our attention to two books, the BIJAK and the ADI GRANTH. In that case we had practically no choice in the matter; these were the only two books which could be regarded as truly representative of the Guru's teaching. The literature of the Panth is ever on the increase, but the thoughts expressed in most of the writings are very similar.[1] It therefore seems best in this case too to confine our attention to two works which may be regarded as representative of the literature as a whole and to present the reader with an abstract of their teaching. The books selected for this purpose are SUKH NIDAN and AMAR MUL, both of which are closely associated with the Dharm Dass section of the Panth.

The SUKH NIDAN is highly spoken of by Prof. H. H. Wilson, but we have come across no evidence in support of his statement that its teaching "is only imparted to pupils whose studies are considered to approach perfection."[2] According to Kabir Panth tradition this book was written in about 1729. The character of the language in which it is written, and the subject matter of the treatise afford evidence in support of this tradition. The *Amar Mul* is of still later origin, but more representative of the teaching given at the present time to members of the Panth.[3]

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[1] For a list of the more important writings in connexion with the Panth, see Additional Note.

[2] Wilson seems to have regarded Dharm Das (the servant of religion) as the representative disciple and to have received no information about that section of the Panth which seems in many ways to be the more important of the two.

Abstract of Sukh Nidan.[4]

CHAPTER I

The Creator who made all things is king of all. He is the ground, the seed, the root, the branches and the tree itself. Nothing exists apart from him. He has existed in all ages and has admonished all. He is to be found in the heart wherein he has settled. Men have been led astray by Maya. From the heart of man springs good and evil; charity, faith, righteousness, sin, goodness, nearness, distance, *tirath* and fasts.

CHAPTER II

Dharm Dass was in the habit of worshipping Salig Rama. He used to bow down to Bhagats and Bairagis and to entertain Sadhus of all kinds. He read the *Bhagawad Gita* and honoured Gopala in word and deed. He wore a TILAK on his forehead and round his neck a MALA of TULSI wood. He visited Dwarka, Jaggannath, Gaya and Banaras, but failed to find rest for his soul. He sang the praises of Rama and Krishna, but all in vain. When he was at Mattra Kabir suddenly appeared before him and asked what he had been doing all his life. Dharm Dass replied that he had been engaged in worshipping the gods and in visiting places of pilgrimage. Kabir told him that both he and the gods whom he worshipped had been deluded by Maya;

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[3] Each book belonging to the Dharm Dass section, and practically all the literature does belong to this section, is prefaced by a list of Mahants up to the date of production. This practice should throw considerable light upon the date of production, but its value is neutralised by two circumstances. The MSS. are generally so badly written that the copyist prefers to copy the list of Mahants from some printed book, while those who do persevere in copying from the original often think it more respectful to the ruling Mahant to bring the list up to date.

[4] For this abstract I am indebted to the Rev. Ahmad Shah.

that gods, like Rama and Krishna who did not even know the hour of their death had no right to be considered omniscient or omnipresent.

CHAPTER III

Dharm Dass was at first disgusted by the teaching of Kabir and thought, 'This low caste man wishes to lead me astray.' He ordered his servant to make a fire that he might prepare food for Salig Rama. Dharm Dass perceived that numberless ants together with their eggs were being consumed in the fire. His heart was touched and he began to think that it was sad that the preparation of food for Salig Rama should involve the loss of so much life. Kabir again appeared before him and rebuked him for his cruelty. He implored him to have mercy upon *Jivas,* to put out the flame and save as many lives as possible. He once more explained that Rama, Krishna and Salig Rama were no gods and that Rama himself had been responsible for the loss of many lives. Kabir when he saw that Dharm Dass was much addicted to fasting, rebuked him, saying that without food or rest he could not expect to find God. It was equally futile, he said, to wander about from one place of pilgrimage to another. He should look for one in whose heart was pity and true religion. Dharm Dass disregarded this advice and continued in his former course.

CHAPTER IV

Dharm Dass next visited Banaras and saw there an extraordinary spectacle; learned Pandits and Brahmins worsted in argument by an ordinary man. He thought to himself, "This must be the ZINDA PURUSH whom I met before at Mattra." He accordingly asked Kabir, Who are you? Where do you live? Whom do you worship? Who is the Creator of the world and who is the Master of this life?

Kabir replies, I am Sat Purush; I am peace and comfort; I am Sukrit; I am Sat Kabir; I am the Creator of this world. I have created the five elements; I have established three qualities; I am the seed and the tree; I am the possessor of qualities; All are contained in me; I live within all and all live within me.

Dharm Dass inquires, If you are all things and there is nothing apart from you, how comes it about that there are heaven and hell, Rama and Krishna, Hindu and Turk?

Kabir replies—Your questions are reasonable, but remember earth, air, fire, water and ether are but forms of me; the whole universe is made of these. Therefore I am in all and all is contained in me. Kabir then in a lengthy speech explained how the universe came into existence. This speech is practically an exposition if certain RAMAINIS and SHABDAS contained in the BIJAK.

CHAPTER V

At the conclusion of this speech Dharm Dass throws his Salig Rama into the river Ganges. He then asked Kabir how he could be described as NIRAKAR (without form) seeing that he is in all things, acts in all things and speaks in all things. Kabir explains at length that Maya has deceived Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and that woman has long been notorious for her craftiness. He mourns for his three sons, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, who had been deceived by Maya, and explains that it is for their sakes, to save them and their descendants, that he has appeared in the world in every age.

CHAPTER VI

Dharm Dass asks, "O Zinda Purush, when there were no fields, no trees, no fruits, no herbs, upon what did you live?" Kabir explains that his body is immortal and requires no material food. He again refers to his three sons and the wickedness of Maya and relates the efforts made by his sons to remove the effects of Maya's evil doing.

CHAPTER VII

Dharm Dass next inquires regarding the division of earth and sky, and the institution of places of pilgrimage. Kabir explains that all this is the doing of his three sons whom Maya had deceived. He explains the character of the various places of pilgrimage and the origin of religious sects and caste. Dharm Dass asks what orders he has for him, that he may obey them.

Kabir replies: My only order for you is that you should save yourself and save others. He concludes by declaiming against false teachers and enlarges on the punishments that await their followers.

CHAPTER VIII

Dharm Dass gives expression to a difficulty that perplexes him. Men journey on pilgrimage to every quarter of the earth, observe fasts and worship the gods, and yet hesitate not to kill fowls, goats, and even cows. What will the end of such men be? This too, Kabir explains, is the doing of Maya. No man can be saved by the mere singing of God's praises, any more than a parrot can save itself from the cat by singing the praises of God.

Dharm Dass asks how salvation is to be obtained. Kabir replies: Be constant, utter not false words, show love to others, associate with good people and especially with Sadhus. Gather wisdom from every source, attend to the wants of holy men: whenever they come to your house, wash their feet and drink the *Charanamrita*: feed them and supply them with every comfort, learn from them whatever of good they can teach you. I am the Sadhu and all Sadhus dwell in me. If you meet with a true Sadhu, then your thoughts, words and deeds will become perfect. There are men who have disguised themselves as Sadhus, but have no right to the title. Then Dharm Dass says, O Sat Guru, now I know that you are the Creator, the true Sadhu and all in all. You are my Master and my place of pilgrimage. I have only one more question to ask: Those who confess their faith in you, dwell in you; but those who fail to recognise you or decline to obey your commands, what will be the end of such men? what has become of those who in old days were accounted sages but knew you not? Kabir replied, All such have been rewarded according to their works. Some have become stars, some insects or moths, some have become plants. Others have gone to hell and there they will remain for many ages. All such must pass through 84 lakhs of forms before they can obtain salvation. Those who believe in me, become absorbed in me.

Dharm Dass entreats Kabir to accompany him to his house that he may also instruct his wife and son. When he returned to his house at Bandogarh his wife, Amini, asked him why he had been absent so long. He tells her that he has found in Kabir him for whom he had been searching so long at places of pilgrimage and bids her also find in him the Creator of the universe, for Kabir had solved for him all the mysteries of this world. Amini says, 'What answer shall I give to your request? You know that some say that the creator is without form, others that he is to be found in the persons of Rama or Krishna.' Dharm Dass relates his own experiences, after which Amini too becomes a disciple of Kabir. Food is prepared and a cocoanut and betel leaf are also brought and Kabir prepares for them the MAHA PRASAD.

Abstract of Amar Mul.[5]

CHAPTER I

Dharm Dass explains that all the souls in the world are overwhelmed with troubles and implores the Sat Guru to extract with all speed the arrow with which their heart is pierced. In reply to this entreaty the Sat Guru declares that immortality attaches to those into whose heart the immortal Word has entered. To Dharm Dass's request for an explanation of the mystery of union and separation, the Sat Guru replies that to obtain Mukhti an understanding of the Letterless One is necessary with the help of the Betel Leaf and the Cocoanut; that the Supreme Being is unconditioned as containing the essence of the Letterless One; conditioned as manifesting the Divine mystery to man; that a true belief in the conditioned and the unconditioned and absorption in the Word are required of all who would escape from the power of Yama and the toils of transmigration.

Without a knowledge of the Name none can safely cross the ocean of existence. To four Gurus has it been given to convey souls safely to the Satya Loka (Paradise), and of these four the chief is Dharm Dass. It is for him and his

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[5] This abstract was prepared from a translation of *Amar Mul* made for me by U. R. Clement, Head Master of the Mission School, Indore, and formerly Second Master of the Collegiate School, Cawnpore.

42 decendants to rescue souls from the tyranny of Kal. Of one alone is Kal afraid and that one is the Word. The spoken word is Maya; the unutterable name alone is true, the name that pervades all hearts. When the voice of the Word was sounded the indestructible one took form. As clouds obstruct the rays of the sun, so does Maya withold from man true knowledge. That soul alone attains perfection which learns the secret of the immortal root (AMAR MUL).

Dharm Dass presses for a further explanation of the Betel Leaf and the Cocoanut. The Sat Guru replies that the Betel Leaf was not produced in the way of nature but proceeded from the Word, and that the Cocoanut when broken by the true Word is accepted as a substitute for the soul which, as all else in the three Lokas, has been made over by Purusha to Dhamrae, theh Angel of Death. The Cocoanut, the Betel Leaf and the Word are the three boats in which souls can safely cross the Ocean of life.

He who would be saved must receive the Betel Warrant, serve the Sadhus with attention and become absorbed in the true Word. This is the secret to be revealed to the wise by Dharm Dass and his descendants.

CHAPTER II

The Sat Guru explains that ATMA and BRAHMA are one through union with Paramatma. Atma stands in the same relation to Paramatma as the wave to the ocean, the spark to the fire and the ornament to the gold out of which it is fashioned. The soul abides in Brahma, as light shines in the rays of the sun. Thus Jiva and Brahma which are commonly regarded as two are really one. Those who have gained this knowledge obtain emancipation.

Dharm Dass next asks the Sat Guru to explain to him the Letterless One, the bodiless Shabda in the body. The Sat Guru explains that all who have assumed bodies have been produced by Shabda. Shabda is perfect and all else fragmentary. The true Shabda reverberates in the Universe. He who knows the Letterless One finds an abode in Satya Loka. In answer to further inquiries the Sat Guru explains that the splendour of the soul in Satva Loka is equal to that of sixteen suns while the glory of Purusha himself is indescribable. The true name is the basis of the soul. By a draught of nectar doubts are removed and the thirst of ages satisfied. All the souls in Satya Loka see with the feelings of love and never give utterance to unkind thoughts. Hope and desire find no place there. The sins of millions of births are washed away by the influence of the Name. Without the Name all efforts are in vain; without the Name knowledge is of no account. As darkness prevails where there is no lamp, so is there darkness in the heart that is without the Name.

CHAPTER III

To reach the Ocean of Bliss souls must serve the Sat Guru and so banish the fear of all; they must receive the sacramental food and render acceptable service to their Guru; they must promote the happiness of others and recognise that the Guru is identical with the Lord; they must be simple-minded and drink the water in which Sadhus have washed their feet; they must never speak ill of their Guru and meditate on the love of the Letterless One; they must remember the Name day and night, and place no trust in the illusion of Karma. He who knows the Name is of the family of Dharm Dass. The Veda knows not the extent of the Name. All declare, 'We know not, we know not.' The Pandit reads and gropes in the dark; he knows not the existence of the Adi Brahma. The acquisition of knowledge produces pride and is of no use in the hour of death. Eighteen Puranas have been written and of these the Bhagawata is the best. It explains the glory of Brahma and establishes the efficacy of devotion. Fools read, but to no purpose; they think not of that which is obtainable through the intellect. Those only obtain wisdom who fall in with the Sat Guru. Of what use is the boat without the boatman?

He who knows the secret of the rosary is absorbed in the true Name. Welcome the secret that overcomes fear in all three forms, physical, mental and spiritual. Escape thus from the halter of many births.

Doubt, the angel of Kal, has taken up his abode in the hearts of men. Doubt is the offspring of Dharma. He who understands the letterless one banishes doubt and enters into the house of immortality. Only through a knowledge of the Name can doubt be banished from the heart.

Dharm Dass urges that but few Jivas possess knowledge. How then can the world escape destruction?

The Sat Guru replies, O impart to you the secret of him that possesses knowledge. The HANSA that receives the Betel warrant will undoubtedly attain Nirvana. He in whose heart there is belief will safely cross the ocean of rebirths. After receiving the Betel he will speak the truth. He will keep the feet of the Sat Guru in his heart. He will sacrifice all for the Sat Guru attend to the needs of the saints. He will banish all fondness for sons and wife and forsake all for the feet of the Sat Guru. He will wash his feet and drink of the washings. So in the hereafter will he drink nectar in Satya Loka. Dharm Dass inquires whether women also can obtain salvation. The Sat Guru replies: Women also can cross the ocean by faith in the Name. Women are without knowledge, therefore they must offer their body, mind and wealth to the Sants, and serve them devotedly. If they despise the Sants they will fall into the snare of Dhamrae. Those women can escape the noose of Kal who offer all at the feet of the Guru and serve him day and night.

The Sat Guru exhorts Dharm Dass to shake off illusion and teach to men devotion, for on him has been placed the burden of the world and it is his seal that will be everywhere respected. To him too has been entrusted the touch-stone by means of which crows (JIVAS) can be converted into swans (HANSAS). Through the vehicle of the Name the shape and colour of the Jiva can be changed.

CHAPTER IV

Dharm Dass inquires into the meaning of the touchstone and is told that it varies in the case of individuals. In the case of the wise it is to be found in a knowledge of Shabda, in the case of children in the reception of the Betel Leaf, and in the case of the passionate in devotion.

After all these explanations the Sat Guru is angered when Dharm Dass asks how it is possible for the Sant to live in this world, and disappears from view. Dharm Dass is much distressed and cries, "Be merciful, O Lord, the perfect Guru. I knew not that you could read the heart; through ignorance I failed to understand your teaching. In my pride I erred; pardon my fault. O Guru, you are the true Guru; like unto Brahma. I was very proud, but when a child speaks foolishly its parents hasten to forget its foolishness. O Lord, the merciful one, have pity on me now. If you do not reveal yourself to me again, I will destroy my life. It was you who imparted to me this religion, therefore I put to you that question." Kabir had pity on Dharm Dass and again appeared before him. The joy of Dharm Dass was as that of the CHAKOR when it beholds the moon.

He held fast to the feet of the Guru and worshipped him; he washed his feet and drank of the water in which they had been washed. Then he prayed, "O Lord, give unto thy servant MAHAPRASAD."

At the bidding of Dharm Dass Amini prepared a plentiful repast and Arti was offered in a golden vessel. The wife of Dharm Dass and all his children fell at the Guru's feet and drank the water in which they had been washed. All listened to the words of divine knowledge. The Lord Kabir sat at the Chauka. After Kabir had eaten and washed, he offered Prasad to Dharm Dass and all those who were present. All that were in the house were filled with joy.

Then Amini prepared a bed upon which the Sat Guru took his seat. Dharm Dass fanned him, while Amini shampooed his feet. All the Sants adored him. Then Amini said, Lord, I offer in thy service this body of mine, my heart, my wealth and all that I possess. Do as it pleaseth thee. Then the Lord took her by the hand and set her beside him on the bed. He tested her and placed his hand kindly on her head and said, Amini, go your way, I see that your mind is chaste. The mind leads one to do good and bad actions, and makes the body act according to its pleasure. For your sake I have renounced all desires of the flesh.

The Sat Guru then renewed his promises to Dharm Dass assuring him that he should have forty-two generations of children in whose hands would rest the salvation of the world.

Dharm Dass said, 'O Lord, grant unto my descendants this blessing that through them souls may be set free. This is my prayer, that my descendants may be accounted as yours; then all will be saved.'

The Sat Guru replied, "In the world the Hansas will be set free by the hands of thy descendants. The children of thy generations shall be welcomed as a touchstone. They will be free from the disturbance of passion, their minds will be absorbed in the contemplation of Shabda, their mode of living will be serious and collected; their thoughts and words will be directed towards the truth; they will have a knowledge of self and subtle things. He is my descendant who knows Shabda. How can he be saved who makes distinctions in the touchstone? I have revealed the path to you, but remember that there is no sin so great as that of hiding the path of salvation. Those who know the Word should proclaim it in various countries and liberate all Hansas that have intelligence. None can be saved without the Name. All who are without the Name are proud. Very few have experience of the Name. Dharm Dass, remember, I am day and night with him who knows the Name."

CHAPTER V

The Sat Guru explains that Dhamrae had objected to his coming into the world to save souls since all three Lokas had been made over to him by Purusha, and had asked by what name he hoped to liberate the Hansas. All who performed religious acts were in his power, including Shiva, as he sat with pride in SAMADHI; in the great day of destruction all would be destroyed by him, even Vishnu, the greatest of all. Gyani had replied that Dhamrae had acted as a thief, seeking to establish his authority where he had no right to rule and that for this reason he had been sent forth to rescue souls by Purusha, the true God, with whom Dhamrae had vainly striven to identify himself. Dhamae had implored Gyani to be kind to him, even as Purusha had been kind, but that Gyani had only consented to leave him undisturbed on condition that he would promise not to approach those who had received the Betel Leaf, to treat with kindness all who had become Gyani and to show love to all who had welcomed Shabda. Dhamrae had accepted this offer, but had at the same time been warned that his rule would come to an end so soon as Shabda had become established in the world.

Dharm Dass thanks the Sat Guru for having thus cooled the lotus of his heart, and asks for a fuller account of Kal.

The Sat Guru explains that Kal is the cause of all actions in this world, that he has deceived the ten Avatars of Vishnu is the cause of virtue and vice, is in reality a form assumed by Purusha and has power over all but Shabda. Kal is the author of that duality which exists wherever the true Word has not been apprehended. YOG, JAP, TAP, sacrifice and alms-giving all have their origin in a fear of Kal. Kal is an embodiment of selfishness; he devours all who live a life of enjoyment. Through Kal creation has come into existence and in Kal it will fade away.

In reply to an inquiry as to which was first Purusha or Kal, the Sat Guru explains that first was space, and that in that space Purusha produced Shabda from Shabda, that space and time (Kal) were really one, but that so terrible was Kal that none dare look upon his face. But for the noose of Kal there had been no need for devotion. Only through a knowledge of the Name could the fear of Kal be overcome.

CHPTER VI

In connexion with an account of the Chauka Dharm Dass asks for how many sins a cocoanut should be broken and is told that a cocoanut is broken for sins a lakh and quarter in number. He is also told that the splitting of the straw will wash away the sins of many births.

The following Mantras are prescribed:

(1) *At the time of drinking water.* Immortal tank and transparent water. The Hansa drinks to his satisfaction. The body is gold, the mind is blissful, the fear of Karma is effaced.

(2) *At the time of bathing.* The water of Sat Sukrit was

brought in. The child of Dhani bathed. He directed his attention to the feet of the Lord. Kabir says—Hear, Dharm Dass, in the beginning and the end there exists an abode of blazing flame. The immortal name is peaceful. In fourteen mansions and nine apartments there is one true Kabir.

(3) *At the time of taking food.* The Chauka is made of the Word that removes fear; purification is the result of satisfaction and good character. There is the light of love and faith; Sat Sukrit began to dine. When the name of Sat Sukrit was pronounced, the water became sacred, giving joy to the Sants. All the Sants united to produce light. Father Kabir began to eat and the wealthy Dharm Dass was taking his food. Then all the Sants took Prasad. The saved enjoyed the absence of fear.

Dharm Dass makes inquiry as to what is necessary for the proper performance of Arti. He is told that in the first place the house should be whitewashed. There should be provided seven cocoanuts, thirty and a quarter maunds of sweet meats of eight different kinds, three and a quarter pounds of sugar candy, twelve thousand betel leaves and a plentiful supply of sandal wood, camphor, cloves, betel-nuts and cardamums. A silk dhoti should be provided for the officiating Mahant, the canopy over the Chauka should be made of gold cloth and the vessel in which the dew is collected should be of gold.

Whoever celebrates an Arti after this manner will pass immediately to Satya Loka, provided that it is not celebrated from any selfish motive.

Dharm Dass urges that in this Kali Yuga men are poor and very few could afford to celebrate an Arti on so liberal a scale.

The Sat Guru replies that a simpler form is permissible. In this three and a quarter pounds of sweets, one cocoanut and a hundred betel leaves will suffice, but a new Dhoti must be provided for the Mahant and an offering of money made by all present to the Sat Guru.

He further adds that when the KADHAR (disciples) are not in a position to celebrate the Arti once a month, it will be sufficient to celebrate it twice in the year, in the months of Phagun (February) and of Bhadon (August).

In conclusion the Sat Guru warns Dharm Dass that the Guru who celebrates the Arti must have a knowledge of the letter, otherwise both he and his disciples will find themselves in Hell (Jam Loka).

CHPTER VII

The Sat Guru discourses on the four castes.

The special duty of the BRAHMIN is to gain a knowledge of Brahma. He in vain repeats the GYATRI, performs SANDHYA and reads the Vedas, if he is devoid of knowledge. Why do the Brahmins confine their attention to Sanskrit? Is the vernacular unsuited to spiritual instruction? The Brahmins in pride of heart despise the Sadhus who are true seekers after God and taunt them with having given up caste for the sake of their stomachs. Those who know not Brahma and neglect to practise devotion cannot obtain salvation.

The special duties of the KSHATRYA are to protect cows, Brahmins and women. But in an age when cows are slaughtered, Brahmins draw their own water and men commit adultery, of what use are the Kshatryas? They commit murder and receive the praise of men, but the true Kshatrya is he who exercises forbearance and has true sympathy with others.

The special duties of the VAISHYA are to have pity upon the hungry and to go on pilgrimage, but it is vain to strain water before drinking, in the desire to save life, if there is no faith in Hari. Those who indulge in sensuality fall into the power of Yamaraj, and in vain worship Parasnath, the great, wise Guru, when they disregard his counsel. Let all such fall at the feet of the Sat Guru and learn the secret of the Name.

The SUDRA whose duty it is to render service has discovered the Bhakti of the Sat Guru. He serves the Brahmin and has cast forth from his heart all desires of the flesh, anger and avarice. He serves also the Kshatryas and the Vaishyas and is well spoken of in Brahma Loka. Other castes neglect their duties, but the Sudra prostrates himself at the feet of the Sat Guru and so finds his way to Satya Loka.

Dharm Dass, you are a Sudra by caste, but all who honour the water of your feet will escape from the ocean of rebirths. The soul that is born a Sudra is saved, if it meditates on Brahma. Kal in vain attacks the soul that knows the mystery of Shabda.

Dharm Dass says, Lord, through you I have obtained Mukti, but why has not my family also obtained it?

The Sat Guru explains that his descendants up to the eighth generation will be tainted with pride, treat with contumely men who bear the name of Kabir, and seek honour in the world instead of placing reliance on the Name.

Those who practise true Bhakti save themselves and others, spend all that they have in feeding Sadhus, speak the truth to all, cherish the true Name in their hearts, suffer not feelings of anger to arise, speak under the influence of the Name, reason about knowledge and preach the doctrine of Shabda.

In the eighth generation will be born a child who will bring men back into the true Path.[6] The Jiva that finds the immortal Name loses all fear. I dwell in the heart in which the immortal Shabda shines. Regrets will be the portion of him who finds not the immortal Name.

CHAPTER VIII

Dharm Dass gives expression to his belief that the Purusha dwells in the Guru and that there is no distinction between the Guru and the Purusha. The Sat Guru again describes the work assigned to Dharm Dass and his descendants. Dharm Dass says that with the permission of the Guru he will send all the children (disciples) to Satya Loka. The Sat Guru reminds him that there are two kinds of children, those of the flesh and those of the spirit, and that the spiritual children are those who cherish the name of the Sat Guru. The time will come, he adds, when all creation will enter Satya Loka and all animate beings become absorbed in the Sat Guru.

Dharm Dass urges that the work of saving souls belongs to the Sat Guru and that he himself might well be relieved of so great responsibility. This the Sat Guru declines to do.

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[6] Are we to infer from this statement that *Amar Mul* was written when the eighth Mahant was on the gaddi?

Dharm Dass inquires why he, being the Purusha, had visited this mortal world. The Sat Guru speaks of the time when there was neither space nor non-space, neither sin nor righteousness, neither Shesha (serpent) nor Kal, neither the seven days of the week nor the fifteen days of the lunar month, when Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva had no existence. Then the Adi Purusha produced the world through Shabda and Shabda produced intelligence. Finally Kal was brought into existence and began to persecute the Jivas. Purusha perceiving this had pity upon them and sent the Sat Guru to rescue them from the clutches of Kal.

He compares Purusha to a child who builds a house and then destroys it and afterwards runs crynig to his mother, saying, "Build again for me my house." Such is the sport of Purusha. He is foolish and he is wise, he is proud and he is humble, he is true and he is false. Such teaching is only for those who have the power to understand.

Dharm Dass asks for an explanation of Atma Gyan that all the Hansas may obtain salvation. The Sat Guru explains that he who has divine knowledge will understand that the Guru and the Chela are one. So also the enemy and the friend are one. Himself is active and himself is passive; himself shows and himself sees; himself causes birth and death. and himself is death; himself is the image and himself the worshipper; himself is the branch and himself the tree; himself is all manifest and himself is hidden in himself.

But why, Dharm Dass asks, why if all is equivalent to Brahma, does the Jiva remain in ignorance? The Sat Guru explains that Brahma is the seed out of which all things are developed and that the Shabda is of subtle form; that the Jiva is in Brahma as the wave is in the sea, the ray of light in the sun, oil in the oil-seed and the scent in the flower.

Such is the relation of Atma to Paramatma.

CHAPTER IX

The Sat Guru explains that all sense of duality is due to Maya, that when man knows himself he becomes himself, and when he realises himself he becomes Brahma. Until he knows himself he weeps and cries, and wades through the swamp of delusion.

The light of knowledge shines forth when Brahma abides in the heart. Then KARMA and DHARMA are obliterated; then there is neither coming nor going. As it was, so it is, and all intervening delusion disappears. All apparent contradictions are reconciled in the fulness of knowledge. Brahma himself is the Word that cannot be uttered, and himself the Word that speaks to all; himself is formless and himself is all the forms; he is both NIRGUNA and SAGUNA. Dharm Dass is warned that he must first purify his own heart and mind before he can so preach to others that they can obtain MUKTI and escape from the toils of Transmigration. All reasonings and religious writings are the work of Maya; what is required is devotion and TATTWAJNAN (the knowledge of essential). All delusion (BHRAMA) is removed through meditation.

The Sat Guru explains that he was once in Satya Loka, or rather beyond it, and that he then saw what is indescribable; that the form of Purusha was wonderful, to be imagined, not described; that the abodes in Satya Loka were innumerable and that in all Hansas was discernible the one letter. In the Loka of Kabir he saw the forms of many Kabirs, but looking again he saw that it was but one form multiplied. In the light of the true Shabda all is one, there is no second.

The people of the world are taught by means of stories, but for those who understand, all such stories fall far short of the truth. All apparent distinctions are the creation of the mind. He who knows the letter thoroughly suffers no duality to enter into his mind. The only difference between Brahma and Jiva is this, that the later is the reflection of the former.

CHAPTER X

The Sat Guru instructs Dharm Dass to act thus in the case of one who wishes to become a disciple. In the first place he should give him betel, then, if he seems to possess JNAN, reveal to him the majesty of Shabda, and when his faith in Shabda is confirmed impart to him profound knowledge. Atmaram abides in the heart of him who has full knowledge. When Atmaram is realised, he himself is Atmaram; he knows no second.

The Sat Guru tells how once when he was in Satya Loka, Purusha appeared to him and said "Kabir, you and I are one; entertain no thought of duality. I am in you and my form is in all the earth. There are eighty-four lakhs of species and I live in all. Besides me there is no second. All creation is delusion. All the countless gods and sages, even Brahma himself, are entangled in delusion." Dharm Dass rejoins, "O Guru, this is your statement. Is there not need of a second witness?" The Sat Guru replies that he made this statement in Treta age, and that Madhukar, Brahmin, is the second witness. He continues, "Kabir is in all bodies; the speaker is Shabda. There is one form and one Shabda. There is only one form, and one Shabda. There is only one form, one Shabda and one Purusha, manifest in all. He who knows one is one; the second is this world."

Dharm Dass asks how it is that Jivas fail to realise their unity with Brahma. The Sat Guru replies, All the Jivas came from Brahma Loka undefiled and devoid of Karma. The clouds lift up the water from the ocean and rain down pure water, but in contact with the earth the water becomes impure. Then is the Jiva embraced by Maya; the body at birth is defiled by Karma. As the air purifies the impure water, so does GYAN remove Karma and the purity of the Jiva is restored. Knowing itself, it separates itself from the water and being disembodied reaches the Durbar. The Atma mingles with Paramatma, as the rivers flow into the ocean. Only in this way can Paramatma be found. The Atma without Shabda is blind and cannot find the path. He who sees Atmaram is present everywhere; all he sees is like himself, there is nought else beside Brahma. "I am he, I am he; the true Kabir."

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Literature on the Life and Teaching of Kabir

Names printed in italics refer to writings that exist in manuscript only. In the case of printed books, the place of publication is added within brackets. An asterisk is prefixed to the names of MSS. known only by hearsay.

1. *Achhar Bhed ki Ramaini.*
2. *Achhar Khand ki Ramaini.*
3. *Agadh Mangal.*
4. *Agam Ujiyar.*
5. *Alif Nama.* (1)
6. *Alif Nama.* (2)
7. *Alif Nama.* (3)
8. *Allah Tok.*
9. *Amar Mul.*
10. Ambu Sagar. (Bombay).
11. Anu Rag Sagar. (Bombay).
12. *Asar Grahi ko ang.*
13. *Atam Anubhau.*
14. *Balakh Paij.*
15. *Bhakti ko ang.*
16. *Bhou Taran.*
17. *Bhopal Bodh.*
18. *Barah Masa.*
19. *Basant.*
20. Bijak with Commentary by Raja of Rewah, (Lucknow, Benares and Bombay).
21. Bijak with Commentary by Puran Dass (Lucknow and Allahabad).
22. Bijak with notes by Rev. Prem Chand (Calcutta).
23. *Chauka ki Ramaīni.*
24. *Chauntīsi.*
25. *Garur Bodh.*
26. *Gauri.*
27. *Gorakh Gusht.*
28. Gur Updesh. (Bombay).
29. *Gyan Dipak.*
30. *Gyan Godrī.*

31. Gyan Sagar. (Bombay).
32. *Hansawali.*
33. *Hanuman Bodh.*
34. *Hori.*
35 *Hori Ram Lila.*
36. Kabir Charitra Bodh. (Bombay).
37. Kabir Kasauti. (Bombay).
38. Kabir Manshur. (Bombay).
39. Kabir Upasna. (Bombay).
40. Kabir Sahib ki Sakhi. (Lucknow).
41. **Kamal Gusht.*
42. *Karni Bina Kathni ko ang.*
43. *Karni Sahit Kathni ko ang.*
44. *Kusangit ko ang.*
45. *Kurmauli.*
46. **Madad Bodh.*
47. *Mangal.*
48. *Mukti Mal.*
49. *Muhammad Bodh.*
50. Mul Ramaini. (Lucknow).
51. **Musa Bodh.*
52. *Nam Mahatam.*
53. **Nanak Gusht.*
54. *Niranjan Gusht.*
55. *Nirbhai Gyan.*
56. *Piya Pahchan ko ang.*
57. *Puno Mahatam.*
58. *Ramanand Gusht.*
59. *Rekhta.*
60. *Sadhu ko ang.*
61. *Sam Darsi ko ang.*
62. *Samjhe Ghat ko ang.*
63. Santokh Bodh. (27 writings, Bombay).
64. *Sarab Gyata ko ang.*
65. *Sar Garbi ko ang.*
66. Sar Sangrah Prishnotar (Lucknow).
67. *Sarawag Saugar Sanyukt.*
68. *Sat Kabir ki Sakhi.*
69. Sat Kabir ki Shatak Satik. (Benares).
70. *Sat Sang ko ang.*

71. *Sat Sang Mahima ko ang.*
72. *Shabd Bhawani.*
73. *Shabd Chauntisi.*
74. *Shabd Pukar.*
75. **Sikandar Bodh.*
76. *Sowansa Gunjar.*
77. *Sukh Nidhan.*
78. *Sukrit Dhyan.*
79. Ugr Gita. (Lucknow).
80. **Vasist Muni Gusht.*
81. Vavek Sagar. (Bombay).
82. *Vavek Sangram.*

In addition to the above H. H. Wilson in *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus,* Vol. I pp. 76-7 mentions.

Anand Ram Sagar.
Balakh ki Ramaini.
Chancharas.
Hindolas.
Jhulanas.
Kabir Panji.
Kaharas.
Shabdawali.

PANDIT WALJI BHAJ

Pandit Walji Bhai, who worked for many years as a Pastor of the Irish Presbyterian Church at Borsad in the district of Khaira in Gujerat, devoted much time to a study of literature connected with the Kabir Panth and the religion of the Sikhs. The Pandit was led to believe that the Kabir Panth was instituted by Jesuits and found confirmation of this belief in the secrecy observed by members of the Panth regarding their literature and teaching.

In 1881 he published in Gujerati under the name *Kabir Charitra* an exposition of his views upon the subject which he has elsewhere summarised thus:

1. In Kabir's book it is written that when the first woman Eve, being deceived, repented of her sin, God promised

that from her sex a great Man will be born and He shall overcome Satan and save His people.

2 According to the promise, God sent His Son to save the world. This Son lived with God as Word from the beginning, and at the appointed time became flesh to save His people and was called Kabir.

3. He was tempted by Satan.

4. At last He was nailed to a tree and suffered agony.

5. God's Son took the burden of His people upon Himself.

6. God's Son worked miracles.

7. God's Son rose from the dead.

8. After God's Son rose from the dead He commanded His disciples to go to all countries and preach the Gospel.

9. God's Son ascended into heaven.

10. In Kabir's books baptism and the Lord's Supper are commanded to be observed. Generally, all the doctrines of the Bible are to be found in Kabir's books.

He further held that Nanak, the disciple of Kabir, was also influenced by Christian teaching and that Hari, the name given to the Sat Guru in the Adi Granth, was used as a synonym for Christ. He worked out his theory with great industry and published the results of his studies in two small volumes, *Hari Charitra* and a *Key to the Adi Granth*.[1]

I had some interesting correspondence with the Pandit which was only interrupted by his death in December 1903.

The Pandit's writings are not marked by any great critical acumen. Many of his interpretations may be regarded as far fetched, while his suggested derivations of words are often more ingenious than convincing. His main position is undermined by the assumption that Kabir is responsible for all literature connected with the Panth. In spite, however, of these defects he has much to say that is both interesting and suggestive. Would that more Indian Christians would study the religious beliefs of their country with equal industry and enthusiasm, and that all Indian Clergy were as diligent as he in studies that result in a more perfect understanding of the Scriptures!

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[1] Both these books were printed at the Presbyterian Mission Press, Ludhiana, Punjab.

APPENDIX

HINDUISM AND ISLAM

KABIR'S EFFORTS TOWARDS MUTUAL APPRECIATION AND SYMPATHY

The following are extracts from "Theism in Mediæval India," being the Hibbert Lecture, Second Series, delivered in 1919 by J. Estlin Carpenter:—

The first serious effort towards mutual appreciation and sympathy was made by the greatest of Indian mystics, Kabir.

Abundant legends gathered around Kabir's name, and much of the surviving literature attached to it may have sprung up among disciples.[1] The hymns of the presence of God celebrate the same theme in many keys; and repetitions of thought and phrase are easily caught up from singer to singer. But the authentic note of a great seer is heard too often to allow us to doubt their source in a mind of profound inner sensitiveness and daring utterance. The most authoritative record of his teaching is found in the collection entitled the BIJAK. Tradition affirmed that it was dictated by Kabir himself to a disciple named Bhagwan Das.[2] It contains hymns in a great variety of metres previously unknown, of which Kabir is most naturally regarded as the inventor. Many more are included in the sacred book of the Sikhs, the ADI GRANTH.[3] On the Hindu side Kabir is commemorated in the BHAKTA MALA as a Saint of devotion, and legendary lives are current in the Hindi, Gujarati, and Marathi dialects. The language of the BIJAK is said to be that spoken in the neighbourhood of Benares, Mirzapur, and

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[1] Cp. Wilson, "Religious Sects," *Works,* i. p. 76. Wilson even thought it "not at all improbable that no such person ever existed," p. 691¹.

[2] Cp. The BIJAK of Kabir, tr. Rev. Ahmad Shah. Hamirpur, U.P. (1917), p. 31. Burn, in Hastings' *ERE,* vii. p. 631, accepts Bhagwan Das, "one of Kabir's immediate disciples," as the compiler, but curiously postpones the work for fifty years after Kabir's death. The term BIJAK is probably used in the sense, of a "key to a hidden treasure." Cp. Ramaini, xxxv. 5, Shah, p. 71.

[3] Macauliffe, vol. vi. pp. 142-316.

Gorakhpur. Many foreign words had been in use for centuries since the Mohammedan invasions, and as many as 235 in Kabir's hymns have been traced to Persian, Arabic, and Turkish origins.[4]

Mystery surrounded Kabir's birth. He spoke of himself afterwards as a Sudra, but that he was brought up by a Mohammedan weaver and his wife at Benares seems well established. Legend told that he was found lying on a bloosoming water-lily in a lake called Lahar Talao, a short distance from the city. A small temple to Kabir still stands by the margin, and near it is the tomb of the weaver Niru.[5] The Qazi was duly invited to open the Qoran, so that the first name which caught his eye might be allotted by destiny to the child. It proved to be Kabir, "great,"[6] an epithet of Allah. But though brought up in a Mohammedan household, he was surrounded by Hindu practice, and early learned among his playmates to call out "Ram, Ram," and "Hari, Hari," when the little Moslems retorted by dubbing him with punning assonance *kafir*, "infidel." Tradition reckoned him among the followers of Ramananda, and even related that he devised a little stratagem as a youth to secure initiation into Ramananda's community. Chronology as usual interposes a difficulty. There is a general agreement to place Kabir's death in 1518. The latest date assigned to that of Ramananda is 1410, at the advanced age of one hundred and eleven. How could Kabir have been one of his missionary band, or even old enough to be received into his religious house? The boy's precocity might have gained him early admission, and his birth was carried back to 1398.[7]

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[4] Shah, p. 30.

[5] Macauliffe. vi. p. 123.

[6] From the same root as Akbar.

[7] Bhandarkar. *Vaisnavism*, p. 69, provisionally accepts this arrangement. At the upper end Macauliffe (p. 104^1) quotes a native work which dates the death as early as 1448; while G. H. Westcott, *Kabir and the Kabir Panth*, Cawnpore, 1907, cuts the knot by delaying his birth till 1440, Chronolog. table, p. vii, without specifying any evidence at all. Westcott suppose him to have been realy Mohammadan by birth, and associated with the Sufi order; he joined Ramananda's followers to break down the barriers between Moslems and Hindus. Dr. Farquhar solves the chronological difficulty by

Kabir grew up in the weaver's house, and practised his trade, though like the Apostle Paul he found time also to teach and to travel. For him the universe was a wondrous loom,—

> "No one knew the mystery of that weaver
> Who came into the world and spread the warp.
> The earth and the sky are the two beams,
> The sun and moon are two filled shuttles,
> Taking a thousand threads he spreads them lengthways;
> To-day he weaveth still, but hard to reach is the far off end."[8]

The threads are the threads of Karma, and the fabric into which they are woven is the mighty sum of conscious and unconscious being. The whole background of Kabir's thought is Hindu. His favourite name for God is Ram. Like all his Vaishnavite predecessors he seeks release from transmigration, and opens the path to deliverance by loving devotion. The ancient mythology provides him with frequent illustrations; the great gods of the venerable Triad, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, still perform their functions in the economy of existence. And Kabir has not studied philosophy for nothing; its language is often on his lips. He may reject its formal systems, but he can boldly restate its ideas. He looks with pity on the many who grew weary searching and searching," for "few were they that found." Reliance on the Scriptures, declarations that God was *nirguna* or *saguna* or *asat,*—these were all vain; "the All-Merciful, the All-Great, he is seen by few indeed."[9] If the arguments of philosophy were futile—"millions of births and ages passed in whims and fancies,"—the practices of caste and idolatory were even worse. Let no false pride mislead men, "that Hindu and Turk are of different family is false."[10] Turning to the Mohammedans, he cried—

> "Adam, who was first, did not know
> Whence came mother Eve.
> Then there was not Turk nor Hindu:
> No blood of the mother, no seed of the father.

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bringing down Ramannanda's date to about 1400-1470. cp. *Theism in Mediæval India* p. 428, and JRAS (1920, April), p. 187.

[8] The BIJAK, tr. Shah (1917), RAMAINI 28, p. 67.

[9] Shah, p. 228.

[10] RAMAINI xxvi. 8, Shah, p. 66.

Then there were no cows, no butchers;
Who, pray, cried 'In the name of God'?
Then there was no race, no caste:
Who made Hell and Paradise?"[11]

The Veda and the Qoran might have their rituals, but if you milk black and yellow cows together, will you be able to distinguish their milk?"[12] Hindu and Turk were pots of the same clay; Allah and Rama are but different names.[13] Why, then, bow the shaven head to the ground, what is the use of sacred bathing-place or prostrations in the mosque? The pilgrim marches with deceit in his heart, what profits his journey to Mecca? And "if by repeating Rama's name the world is saved, then by repeating 'sugar' the mouth is sweetened;" if men could get rich by merely saying "wealth," none would remain poor. Looking on the naked ascetic, he declared that all the deer of the forest might equally be saved; the bathers at morning and evening were satirically reminded that frogs were in the water all day; if the worship of stones was of any avail, Kabir proclaimed that he would worship a mountain; but lip-service could profit nothing:

"It is not by fasting and repeating prayers and the creed
That one goeth to heaven;
The inner veil of the temple of Mecca
Is in man's heart, if *the truth* be known."[14]
"Make thy mind thy Kaaba, thy body its enclosing temple,
Conscience its prime teacher: . . . . .
Sacrifice, wrath, doubt, and malice;
Make patience thine utterance of the five prayers.
The Hindus and the Musalmans have the same Lord."[15]

Married, with son and daughter, Kabir plied his trade at Benares, where he confronted the Brahman pandits and ascetics. For some time, also, he lived at Manikpur on the Ganges, in the Fatehpur district, and he afterwards proceeded to Jhusi, opposite to the fort of Allahabad. Here he encountered famous Mohammedan teachers, of whom Shaikh Taqqi was the most distinguished.[16] A cotton-cleaner by profession, he belonged to a Sufi order, and Moslem tradition claims him as Kabir's *pir* or teacher. Kabir made no pious journeys to Vrindavana or Puri, but he speaks of himself as much-travelled; he knew many men and cities; he has wandered into the Deccan as far as the Nerbuda river; he has been a visitor at kings' courts; the royal and the rich have been among his disciples. From Shaikh Taqqi he is said to have asked a blessing which would enable him to remove the differences which parted Hindus and Moslems.[17] It was a vain attempt at reconciliation; his efforts only awoke anger, and Mohammedan hostility culminated in a summons before the Sultan Sikandar Lodi at Jaunpur in 1495.[18] Rumour had already ascribed to Kabir the revivifiation of a dead boy and girl. The sovereign of Delhi imposed the same test which his predecessor Muhammad bin Tughlak had demanded from Namdev. A cow was slaughtered in the imperial presence, and Kabir, who had already emerged triumphant from three trials, was ordered to reanimate her. He stroked her with his hand, made an encouraging noise as if driving her, and the cow stood up quite sound.[19] But religious enmity was not the only issue of Kabir's labours. Out of the storms of life's experience he had won peace.

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[11] RAMAINI xl., Shah, p. 72.
[12] RAMAINI, xxxix, 2, lxii. 5, Shah, pp. 72, 82.
[13] SHABDA, xxx. xcvii, Shah, pp. 110, 141.
[14] Macauliffe, vi. pp. 140, 145, 215, 205.
[15] Macauliffe, vi. p. 258.

> "When I met the True Guru, he showed me the way,
> The Father of the world then became dear to my mind;
> I am thy son, Thou art my Father,
> We both live in the same place."[20]

So he could say, "Kabir is the child of Allah and Ram; He is my Guru, He is my Pir."[21] There were men and women of both religions who could follow this vision, though afar off. The aged Teacher was at Magahar, some fifteen miles west of Gorakhpur. Common belief affirmed that those who passed away there would be reborn as asses, and the disciples entreated that the Master should return to Benares to die propitiously in the holy cty. "What is Benares, what the waste land of Magahar," replied the saint, "if Rama dwells in my heart?" His departure seemed to him like a bridal; King Rama, his husband, had come to his house to fetch him; "I go hence," he exclaimed triumphantly, "wedded to the One, the Immortal"[22] The Hindus wished to cremate the body, the Mohammedans to bury it. The disputants waxed hot over the bier, when a voice bade them raise the shroud which covered it. The corpse vanished, and in its place lay only a heap of flowers.[23]

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[16] RAMAINI, xlviii, Shah, p. 76. Westcott, p. 39, endeavours to distinguish between two teachers of the same name.

[17] Westcott, p. 42.

[18] On the river Gamti, slightly N.W. of Benares, Sikandar reigned from 1488 to 1517; he ruined the temples at Mathura, cp. *Theism*, p. 433.

[19] Macauliffe, vi. p. 133, quoting a hymn ascribed to Kabir; Shah, pp. 24-26.

[20] Macauliffe, vi. p. 197.

Kabir is regarded as the father of Hindi literature. His copious utterances may be classified according to their metres, but they cannot be aranged in dates. The clues to his spiritual history are lost, and the phases of his experience toss to and fro in his verses, lighting up his character and illustrating his moods, but obscuring his development. He starts as a follower of Ramananda, who "drank deep of the juice of Rama." That teaching he repeated to a heedless world till he was weary.[24] Around him he saw only the blind pushing the blind, and both falling into the well.[25] Vehement in his protests against conventional religion, and unable to carry either its professors of learning or its ignorant commonalty with him, he stood alone, and the loneliness was very grievous. Like the Buddha of old he saw the whole world burning,[26] but he found no leader to whom he might join himself. "I never met a bosom friend," he complains sadly.[27] It was an iron age, but that which was in the vessel must needs come out of the spout.[28] Sometimes it seemed that he was the only madman and all the world was wise; and then confidence replaced self-doubt, Kabir was the only true Yogin, the rest were delusion's slaves.[29] So life was for him, as for Plato, a practice of dying.[30] Fierce sometimes was the struggle. "I am the worst of men," he cries in self-abasement,[31] like the apostolic "chief of sinners." He counts up his possessions, lust, wrath, covetousness, pride and envy; "I have forgotten him who made and favoured me—preserve me, O God, though I have offended thee." "There is none so merciful as thou, none so sinful as I."[32] For such a leader life was bound to be a battle, and in noble words he called comrades to the strife which he himself waged even to old age:[33]

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[21] *One Hundred Poems of Kabir,* tr. Rabindranath Tagore (London, 1914). p. 46, lxix.

[22] Shah, p. 27.

[23] The voice was variously ascribed to an aged saint, an utterance from the sky, and an appearance of Kabir himself. The grave has ever since been in Mohammedan keeping. Westcott, p. 44.

[24] SHABDA, lxxvii. 4; Shah, p. 132. Cp. Tagore, p. 23 (xxix).

[25] Westcott, p. 79 (4), 71, (117). Cp. *Luke* vi. 39; *Matt.* xv. 14.

[26] SAKHI 340, Shah, p. 216.

> "Lay hold on your sword, and join in the fight,
> Fight, O my brother, as long as life lasts.
>
> ... ...
>
> In the field of this body a great war goes forward,
> Against passion, anger, pride, and greed.

It is in the kingdom of truth, contentment, and purity that this battle is raging, and the sword that rings forth most loudly is the sword of His Name. . . .

It is a hard fight and a weary one, this fight of the truth-seeker; for the vow of the truth-seeker is harder than that of the warrior, or of the widowed wife who would follow her husband.

For the warrior fights for a few hours, and the widow's struggle with death is soon ended;

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[27] *Ibid.*, 339, Shah, p. 316.
[28] SHABDA xxi 5, Shah, p. 105.
[29] SHABDA, xlviii, 5, SAKHI, iii, 16, Shah pp. 118, 214. SHABDA cii. 5, Shah, p. 144.
[30] Westcott, p. 51 (14).
[31] Macauliffe, vi. p. 279; Westcott, p. 71 (120).
[32] Macauliffe, vi. pp. 244, 230.
[33] Macauliffe, vi. p. 229 (iii).

But the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night, as long as life lasts it never ceases."[34]

So did he wrestle with himself, declaring that there was no penance higher than truth—"In him within whose heart is truth doth God himself abide."—till he could say, "I have now become pure in heart, and my mind is happy."[35] The sense of deliverance burst forth in ecatasy, "Thou hast united Thy heart to my heart."

The life of emotion must needs have its vicissitudes; the life of thought was more stable. Rama's cliff was very high, but Kabir had climbed it, and though clouds might sometimes veil it, he could never forget the mighty prospect which its elevation had afforded.

"The house of Kabir is on the mountain peak, where the path is winding.
There the foothold even of the ant is not sure, there men load their oxen no more."[36]

The first result of the contemplation of this vast expanse was the intense conviction of the omnipresence of God. To this theme innumerable hymns are dedicated.

"None can find the limit or the secret of the Sustainer of the earth:
He shineth in the plaintain blossom and in the sunshine,
And hath taken his dwelling in the pollen of the lotus,
The great God reacheth from the lower to the upper regions of the firmament;
He illumineth the silent realm where there is neither sun nor moon.
Know that he pervadeth the body as well as the universe.
He who knoweth God in his heart and repeateth his name,
Becometh as he."[37]

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[34] Tagore, *One Hundred Poems,* p. 28.
[35] SAKHI, p. 343, Shah, p. 217; Macauliffe, vi. p. 250.
[36] SAKHIS, xxxi, xxxiii. Shah, p. 187.
[37] Macauliffe, vi. p. 268 (condensed).

"The earth bloometh, the firmament rejoiceth;
Every heart is gladdened by God's light.
The Lord God rejoiceth in endless ways,
Whithersoever I look, there is he contained.[38]

But this was no monist doctrine of identity. The ancient formula "That art thou" is expressly repudiated. The reality of the world cannot be denied, for it would involve the denial of its Infinite Cause. Kabir can try his hand at retelling the story of creation; "In the first beginning there was thought"—the Unconditioned Intelligence whence all things proceed. Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, and Sakti play their appointed parts with the help of the mystic syllable Om and the sacred verse known as the Gayatri.[39] But this learned trifling in Upanishad style is not Kabir's real philosophy. That rests on profound inner experience, where "the Eternal Being is his own proof." It is possible for the soul to confront the Source of its existence, to recognise it as All-pervading, and yet to retain its own independence:

"O Rama, I am standing at they door!
O Kabir, come and meet with me!
Thou art merged in all,
But I would not utterly be merged in thee."[40]

It is an experience of wonder and awe, too profound for words. Behind all visible forms lies the realm of the Unseen, unconfined, illimitable, home of all types of creation in the mind of God. No human speech can show forth its fulness:

"O how may I ever express that secret Word?
O how can I say He is not like this, He is like that?
If I say that He is within me, the universe is ashamed:
If I say that He is without me, it is falsehood.
He makes the inner and the outer worlds to be
indivisibly one;
The conscious and the unconscious both are his footstools.

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 269.

[39] Cp. RAMAINIS, i-iii, Shah, p. 51 ff.; Bhandarkar, VAISNAVISM, p. 70; Tagore, p. 21.

[40] SAKHI, cclx, Shah, p. 209.

[41] Tagore, p. 6, ix.

He is neither manifest nor hidden, He is neither revealed nor unrevealed;
There are no words to tell that which He is."[41]

Here is a conception which embraces all the contrarieties of life, and transcends them all. Like the opposites which Heracleitus beheld blended within a higher unity, differences and antagonisms disappear. The right hand and the left hand are the same; the inward and the outward become as one sky; life and death are in conflict no more, their separation is ended; in the light of love day and night, joy and sorrow, cease to be at strife; fear and trouble pass away, and renunciation is transfigured into bliss. For he who is within is without, and one love pervades the whole world.[42]

In the valuable interpretative essay by Miss Evelyn Underhil this apprehension of opposites as complementary in a perfect whole is described as "the synthetic vision of God," where the contrast between the Absolute of philosophy and the "sure true Friend" of devotional religion is carried up to a higher place and disappears in light.[43] Kabir's vision soars above the world of sense and change, as all Hindu metaphysic sought to rise above the successions of time into the realm of the Eternal. All round us is a constant process, the fruit comes from the flower, the tree from the seed, and within the seed is an inmost germ of life. So in the universe which he figured as a mighty tree,[44] behind its wondrous forms and manifold forces, conducting its growth and accomplishing its dissolution, lay the mysterious Brahman, shaping to our view the hidden treasures of the Everlasting and Unseen. The limit and the Limitless, the finite and the Infinite, were both there in mutual relation, and neither could exist without the other. What, then, united them? Even this mighty difference must be resolved in some secret source, the inner spring of all existence. Reason must needs fail to describe it, but insight could pierce the veil and affirm it, and Kabir could bodly sing—

"As the seed is in the plant, as the shade is in the tree,

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[42] Tagore, in many passages, *e.g.*, pp. 13, 15, 16, 19, 49, 65.
[43] Tagore. p. xv.
[44] Macauliffe, vi. p. 242, the manifestation of God.

> as the void is in the sky, as infinite forms are in the void—
> So from beyond the Infinite, the Infinite comes; and from the Infinite the finite extends.
> ... ...
> He himself is the limit and the limitless; and beyond both the limited and the limitless is He, the Pure Being.
> He is the Immanent Mind in Brahma and in the creature.
> ... ...
> The Supreme Soul is seen within the soul,
> The Point is seen within the Supreme Soul,
> And within the Point the reflection is seen again.
> Kabir is blest because he has this supreme vision.[45]

So Plato had mounted beyond the worlds of Becoming and Being to the Good, and a later disciple had designated this Supreme Mind as a Point, neither good nor evil but above both. So Plotinus, in whom Platonism reached its highest expression, sought to apprehend the Absolute, as yet undivided between subject and object, and hence beneath all diversity even within Itself. And so Clement of Alexandria had pursued his search for Reality till he too reached a Point or Monad where God could be recognised not by what he *is* but by what he is *not*.[46] But, like Kabir, Clement needs a God whom he can love. As he contemplates the Creator's goodness, his heart overflows with holy joy. He dwells on the variety of the divine graces and invitations with which the Eternal designs to draw to himself the spirits of the children he has made, and even likens his anxiety for souls to the mother-bird's care for a nestling that has fallen out of the nest. Such tenderness can he combine with the severity of metaphysical abstraction. Is it more than a coincidence that Clement and Kabir should both help themselves out with intermediate conceptions which bear at least a superficial analogy to each other? As Clement surveys the higher correspondence of human thought in the teachings of prophets and law-givers, of poets and philosophers, he sees everywhere the action of a Divine Revealer, using the Logos or Word as his great educative instrument.[47] Hindu theology had long evolved a conception of SABDA, "sound" or utterance, which played a great part in the defence of the doctrine of the eternity of the Vedas.[48] The term acquired important significance when it came to be used not of individuals but of species, and thus stood for some kind of intellectual conception.[49] The Vedanta Sutras affirmed that the world originated from the Sabda or Word, not in the sense in which Brahman was its material cause, but in the sense of the logical priority of the idea to the class or group. It is Kabirs's way to play with the language of the schools, with *maya,* the *gunas,* and the life. So he starts one of his fancy sketches of the world's evolution by assumisng the existence of Light and Sound (or Word). The Word was a woman (Desire), identified in another cosmogonic sketch with the Gayatri, the most sacred verse of the Rig Veda.[50] The student of the ancient tales of the origin of the universe is familiar with the mysterious potencies ascribed to certain words such as the sacred syallable Om, a perfect reservoir of powerful energies; "From the word Om the creation sprang," says Kabir.[51] So the Word comes to be the symbol or expression of the spiritual principles of the whole field of existence. To reognise it is to destory doubt.[52] The only way out of transmigration is to "make your abode with the Word," to live in fellowship with the Eternal,[53] for it is the Word which gives the vision of the Invisible.[54] That quenches all ignoble cravings, for "he in whose heart God hath implanted his Word hath ceased to thirst.'[55] There are teachers of diverse kinds, says Kabir, "worship ever that Guru who can reveal the secret of the Word."[56] Nay, "the Word is the Guru, I have heard it and become the disciple," and it is the Word from which the universe has sprung.[57] So it belongs really to the soul's very being; it is the authentic witness of participation in the Immortal,—

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[45] Tagore, p. 4. vii.

[46] The familiar antithesis of the *saguna* and *nirguna* Brahman in Hindu philosophy.

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[47] Cp. J. E. Carpenter, *Phases of Early Christianity* (New York, 1916), pp. 345-349.

[48] Cp. Muir, Sanskrit Texts^2, Vol. iii. (1868) p. 71 ff.

[49] Cp. Sankara on *The Vedanta Sutras,* i. 3. 28; SBE, xxxiv. p. 202.

[50] RAMAINIS, i, and ii; Shah, p. 51; Bhandarkar, p. 70.

[51] Tagore, p. 56, lxxxii.

[52] SAKHI, lxxxviii, Shah, p. 192.

[53] *Ibid.*, cccxxxviii, Shah, p. 226.

[54] *Ibid.*, ccclxiii., Shah, p. 219.

"Kabir says: 'Listen to the Word, the Truth, which is your essence. He speaks the Word to himself and He Himself is the Creator."[58]

And the utterance of the Word is love and joy.

Philosophies had been reared in India on the doctrines of pain or illusion. Existence had been viewed in the gloom of universal suffering, or the shadow of unreality. For Kabir such vision was essentially false. True, egoism was the root of all evil; no insight was possible for the heart insistent on the satisfaction of its own claims. "Where there is 'I' there is 'my'"; and sorrow bred sin; but "where there is mercy there is strength; where forgiveness, there is He."[59] When Kabir had been thrown into the Ganges in chains, flung into fire and exposed to an elephant's fury, by the orders of Sikandar Lodi, tradition told that he sang "My spirits fell not, why should my body fear?" and bade his followers sow flowers for those who for them sowed thorns.[60] Let daily life be free from care, "the Giver is powerful; the beasts of the field, the birds and the insects, have neither wealth nor storehouse."[61] When his mother wept at his adoption of the religious life, he replied "While the thread was passing through the bobbin I forgot my Beloved God. Hear, O my mother, the One God will provvide for us and them"[62] He understood the great paradox of life, "Who saves his heart loses his head; who severs his head finds a head;" does not the candle give added light when trimmed?[63] The key to the great secret lay in love, and "he drinks the cup of love who lays down his life for others."[64] Such love he saw for ever pouring through the world. The mighty rhythm of the universe was its constant manifestation. For the heart that was darkened with desire earth and sky did but swing in the swing of delusion. Night and day they swung, kings and peoples, millions of souls together through each year's rains, through the Four Ages, through illimitable Aeons.[65] Do but mount to Kabir's house on Rama's height and you will see the infinite process revealed as the Creator's Game of Joy.[66] Earth and sky, sun and moon, land and water, oceans and rivers, life and death, are all his wondrous play. God is in all consciousness, all joys and sorrows of the common lot, "He holds all within his bliss."[67]

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[55] Macauliffe, vi. p. 227. Cp. other passages quoted by Westcott, p. 68.

[56] SAKHI, ccccxvii. Shah, p. 225.

[57] Tagore, p. 39, lvii.

[58] Tagore, p. 33, xlvi.

[59] SAKHI, ccccxxx, Shah, p. 225.

[60] Macauliffe, vi, p. 267; Westcott, p. 83(24).

[61] Westcott, p. 95 (90) Cp. Tagore, p. 42, lxiii.

[62] Macauliffe, vi. p. 216.

> "Behold what wonderful rest is in the Supreme Spirit! and he enjoys it who makes himself meet for it.
> Held by the cords of love, the swing of the ocean of joy sways to and fro; and a mighty sound breaks forth in song.
> Music is all around it, and there the heart partakes of the joy of the Infinite Sea.
> There the unstruck music is sounded; it is the music of the love of the Three Worlds.
> Look upon life and death; there is no separation between them."[68]

Like the Seer of the Apocalypse, Kabir heard the whole universe singing in adoration day and night. The harmonies of the Divine Joy sounded continually in his ears; the unbeaten melodies filled the air like light. "Dance, my heart, dance to-day with joy!" he cried in ecstasy, the hills and the sea, life and death, dance to these strains of love. Navy, the Creator

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63 Westcott, p. 92(75).
64 Wescott, p. 84(29).
65 *Hindola*, Shah, p. 182 f.
66 Tagore, p. 56, lxxxii.
67 Tagore, p. 21, xxvi.
68 Tagore, p. 12 f. Cp. the whole of this wonderful poem.

himself "dances in rapture, and waves of form arise from His dance."[69] Well might he appeal to the selfish and blind—

> "Open your eyes of love, and see Him who pervades world.
> He will tell you the secret of love and detachment, and then you will know indeed that He transcends this universe.
> There the Eternal Fountain is playing its endless life-streams of birth and death.
> They call Him Emptiness who is the Truth of truths, in Whom all truths are stored.[70]
>
> There within Him creation goes forward, which is beyond all philosophy; for philosophy cannot attain to Him;
> There is an endless world, O my Brother! and there is the Nameless Being, of whom nought can be said.
> Only he knows it who has reached that region: it is other than all that is heard and said."[71]

To those who had penetrated to this open secret he might well say, "We shall not die though all creation die; we have found One that quickeneth."[72] Using the figure common in *bhakti* poetry of the night-bird gazing at the moon, he declares God his Lord and himself God's servant—nay, "I am Thy son, Thou art my Father, we both live in the same place."[73] Such a relation no outward change can sever; it is the guarantee of immortality.

> "From the beginning till the ending of time there is love between Thee and me; and how shall such love be extinguished?
> Kabir says: 'As the river enters into the ocean, so my heart touches thee."[74]

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[69] Tagore,pp. 21, 24, xxvi and xxxii.

[70] Alluding to the doctrines of the "Void," and the "True of the true," Cp. *Theism* pp. 88, 195.

[71] Tagore, p. 50 f., lxxvi; cp. p. 65, xcvii.

[72] Westcott, p. 96 (96).

[73] Macauliffe, vi. p. 197.

[74] Tagore, p. 26, xxxiv.

Out of the teachings of Kabir a religious order or Panth was formed in his name. The Kabir Panthis may be found all the way from Orissa and Bihar to the Punjab (though they are not numerous in Bengal), in the Central Provinces, in Bombay and Gujarat. There is an establishment of pre-eminent dignity at Benares (Wilson, "Religious Sects," *Works*, i. p. 97), and two at Maghar for Hindus and Mohammedans (Westcott, p. 99). Some are asetics living in religious houses (but occasionally keeping concubines), others follow trades (e.g. especially as weavers), abstaining from meat and intoxicants (*Census Reports* for 1911, Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, p. 243; Punjab, p. 122). The latter reckons the Panthis in the Punjab at 89,254, the numbers having considerably declined since 1891. One branch derives its succession from a disciple named Dharm Das, to whom Kabir himself appeared (according to one tradition) after his death, having appointed him his successor; and one of their books, the *Sukh Nidan,* represents Kabir as the Infinite Spirit, Creator of the world, etc. (Westcott, p. 144).

Dadu, a disciple of one of the Panth teachers about 1600, at the close of the reign of Akbar, is commemorated by Dadu Panthis (*Census Report* for the Punjab, 1891, p. 147; Rose, *Glossary of Tribes,* etc. ii. p. 214). The teaching of Dadu was of a Quietist type (Wilson, i. p. 103 ff.). "Whatsoever Rama willeth, that without the least difficulty shall be. Why therefore do ye kill youselves with grief, when grief can avail you nothing?" "All things are exceeding sweet to those who love God." "O God who art the Truth, grant me contentment, love, devotion, faith." "He that formed the mind made it as it were a temple for himself to dwell in." The influence of Kabir may be traced far beyond the limits of those who take his name. "There is hardly a town in India where strolling beggars may not be found singing songs of Kabir in original, or as translated in the local dialects;" Bhattacharja, *Hindu Castes and Sects,* p. 496.[75]

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[75] The page numbers of Westcott's book mentioned in this article all refer to the original edition of the work.

GLOSSARY

Achhar letter of the alphabet.
Agadh deep, unfathomable.
Agam unfathomable.
Akhas the fifth element, ether.
Alif-nama account of Arabic alphabet.
Amar immortal.
Ambu perception, mind.
Amrita immortal (drink), nectar.
Anand happiness.
Anurag desire.
Arti sacrificial offering of light.
Atma soul.

Bairag renunciation of the world.
Bandagi service, respectful salutation as from a slave to his master.
Barah twelve.
Basant tune or hymn associated with the season of spring.
Batasa small wafer, made of sugar.
Be-dharm without religion.
Bhajan hymn, sung as an act of worship.
Bhakti devotion.
Bhawani wife of Shiva. Shabd Bhawani, a morning hymn.
Bhau fear.
Bhed secret, mystery.
Bodh knowledge.
Bunniah shop-keeper.

Chanchara an evening hymn.
Charitra picture, biography.
Chauka square space, specially prepared for the consumption of food.
Chauntisi Thirty four, letters of Hindi alphabet.
Chela disciple, in relation to spiritual guide Guru.

Dal the split grain of certain kinds of pulse.
Dhoti a cloth, tied round the waist and falling over the legs.

Dhyan attention to.
Dipak lamp.
Durbar a royal levee, the judgement hall of God.

Garur a mythical bird, mentioned in the Ramayana.
Gauri a musical measure.
Ghát mind.
Ghat flight of steps, leading down to the river; used for religious bathing, for the cremation of the dead etc.
Ghi clarified butter.
Godri a patch-work coat, worn by *sadhus*.
Gunjar echo.
Gusht dialogue, contraversy.
Gyan wisdom.
Gyani possessed of wisdom.
Gyata wise.
Gyatri a sacred verse from the Rig Veda, used by Brahmins and others in their morning devotions.

Hansa goose, used figuaratively for the soul of man, as never abiding in one place.
Hindola hymn, sung while swinging in a sitting position.
Hori a musical mode, used during the Holi, a spring festival.

Jam angel of death.
Janeo the sacred thread worn over the left shoulder by members of the twice-born castes: the Brahmins, the Kshattriyas and the Vaishyas.
Jap the mumbling of prayers or other devotional exercises.
Jhulana hymn sung while swinging, in a standing position.
Jiva soul, life.

Kadhar disciple.
Kafir unbeliever, from a Muhammadan point of view.
Kahara a musical mode.
Kal time, death.
Kanthi a necklace, made generally of fruit seeds or wooden beads.
Karma action as involving punishment or reward.
Kasauti touchstone.
Khand group, division.
Kusangit associating with wicked persons.

Lakh number, 100,000.
Langoti loin-cloth.
Lila play, drama.
Loka world.

Maha prefix = great.
Mahatam greatness.
Mala rosary.
Mangal joy, hymn of praise.
Mantra a verbal formula, used for religious or semi-religious purposes.
Manshur spreading abroad, publication.
Masa month.
Math monastic building.
Mukti liberation, salvation.
Mul root.

Nidahn mansion, abode.
Niranjan void of passions, a title applied to God by Kabir Panthis.
Nirbhai without fear.
Nirguna without qualities.

Pahchan knowledge.
Paij entry.
Pan betel leaf.
Panch Mal rosary with five strings.
Pande a high caste Brahmin.
Panji path.
Param-atma the great, all-pervading soul.
Param-eshwar the Great God.
Parwana authoritative document, passport.
Pir Muhamadman saint.
Piya husband.
Prasad offering made to God.
Prishnotar catechism.
Pukar call.
Puno the day of full moon.
Puno Granth form of service used at *Puran Masi.*
Puran Masi the festival of full moon.
Purush being, person.

Ramaini a short exposition of religious truth.

Rekhta Poetry, written in a mixed dialect (Hindi, Urdu, Persian, Arabic etc.).

Sadhu a Hindu monk.

Sagar sea.

Saguna with qualities.

Sakat man of the world, unspiritual.

Samadh the tomb of a holy man.

Samadhi the condition of one completely absorbed in religious meditation.

Sam Darsi concentration of attention on one object.

Samjhe understanding.

Sandhya the meeting of day and night; a form of devotion used at that time.

Sangrah protection.

Sangram battle, controversy.

Sanyukt union.

Sar whole.

Sarab complete.

Sarawag whole.

Sat-sang association with good men.

Satya true.

Shabda a word or saying; the word of God, see Add. Note elsewhere

Shaikh a Muhammadan priest.

Shastras a code of laws, the Hindu scriptures.

Shatah one hundred approximately.

Smriti memory, religious teaching based upon tradition.

Somtokh contentment.

Sowansa breath.

Sudra a Hindu, not belonging to one of the three twice-born castes.

Sukh peace.

Sukrit virtuous.

Swami a Hindu religious teacher, held in great respect by his disciples.

Tap the practice of religious austerities.

Taran enabling to cross (river or ocean).

Tilak a sect mark, usually worn upon the forehead.

Tinka straw.
Tinka-Arpan the offering of straw in sacrifice; the name given to the initiatory service in the Kabir Panth.
Tirtha a place of pilgrimage.
Tok atom.
Ugra a title of Shiva.
Ujiyai light.
Upasna fasting.
Updesh teaching.
Vavek discrimination.
Yam the angel of death.
Yog religious meditation.
Yuga age in the world's history.
Zinda living.

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Dewlling upon the literature of the Kabir Panth Dr. F. E. Keay in his "Kabir and His Followers" mentions in the seventh chapter of his book the following literary products of the Kabir Panth:

1. *Sukh Nidhan* (*Treasure of Happiness*) probably belonging to about the middle of the eighteenth century A.D. 2. The *Guru Mahatmya* (*Greatness of the Guru*). 3. The *Gorak Gushti* or *Gorakhnath ki Goshti :* An imaginaray conversation between Kabir and Gorakhnath, a celebrated *Yogi*. 4. The *Amar Mul* (*Root of Immortality*) : composed about 1800 and consists of 5,000 stanzas and is in the form of conversation between Kabir and Dharm Das. 5. The *Kabir Bani :* Conversation between Kabir and Dharm Das. 1500 stanzas. 6. The *Alif Nama*. In Hindi written in the form of an acrostic. 7. *Rekhtas :* Short dialectic poems in praise of the *guru* or of God. 8. The *Bara Santosh Bodh* (*Knowledge of the True Satisfaction*). Conversation between Kabir and Dharm Das. 9. The *Mukti Mul*. Conversation between Kabir and his disciple Dharm Das. 10. The *Bhavataran* (*The Crossing of the Ocean of Existence*). Conversation between Kabir and Dharm Das. 11. The *Bhed Sar* (*Essence of the Secret*).

Dialogue between Kabir and Dharm Das. 12. The *Prithvi Khand* : Same kind of dialogue on the origin of the world. An elaborate cosmogony. 13. The *Adi Bhed* : Kabir's instruction to Dharm Das regarding cosmogony etc. 14. The *Jnana Saroda* : A mystical discourse. 15. The *Swas Gurjari Ki Sail*. A poem in the form of a mystical discussion of the vital airs. 16. The *Karma Bodh* : A dissertation in prose and verse on the evils of Karma. 17. The *Niranjan Bodh* : A poem. 18. The *Jnana Bodha* : Conversation with and address to Dharm Das by Kabir. 19. The *Mukti Bodh* : Conversation between Kabir and Dharm Das. 20. The *Chauka Swarodaya* : A mystical poem about the sun and moon and as to how the *Chauka* is to be prepared for worship. 21. The *Daya Sagar*. 22. The *Jnana Stotra*. 23. *Jnana Godri* : These three books are poems in praise of *guru*, who is identified with Kabir. 24. The *Chitawani* : A short didactic poem. 25. The *Anuragsagar* : Conversation between Kabir and Dharm Das on Vedanta. 26. *Samadhi Ki Tika* : Mahant Paramottam Das of Chhapra. 1908. Conversation between Dharm Das and Kabir before the *Samadhi* (death) of the former. 27. The *Jnana-Prakasa* : Bairagi Maha Das, Narsingpur, 1908. An account of the *Kabirpanthi* doctrine, cosmogony etc. 28. The *Jiva Dharma Bodh* : A long poem of over three thousand stanzas. 29. The *Muhammad Bodh* : An imaginary conversation with Muhammad. 30. The *Jaina Dharma Bodh* : It shows the superiority of the *Kabirpanthi* faith to the Jaina religion. 31. The *Kabiri Mansur* or *Kabir Mansur*. 32. The *Kabir Kasauti* or *Touchstone of Kabir*. 33. The *Kabir Chaura* : A Commentary by Mohim Das, 1915. 34. The *Panch Granthi* by Ram Rahas, Burhanpur. 35. The *Kabiropasana Paddhati* : A Manual. 37. *Dasamatra* in Sanskrit. 38. *Kabirukottara Satakara* in Sanskrit

Many other *Kabirpanthi* works are to be found in Gujrati, Bengali, Telugu and other languages showing the widespread influence of the teaching of Kabir.

For a more detailed list of books, manuscripts etc. on the life and teaching of Kabir see Additional Notes, page 112.

TAGORE'S ONE HUNDRED POEMS

Regarding *One Hundred Poems of Kabir:* An English translation of Kabir's poems, Dr. Keay observe as follows in his *Kabir And His Followers:*

"The Rev. Ahmad Shah has made a careful examination of this translation, and finds that it is really based not on the Hindi text but upon the Bengali translation, (of Kshiti Mohan Sen) which is far from accurate. Kshiti Mohan Sen's collection is in four volumes and contains 341 poems. The hundred poems translated are taken from the first three volumes, which contain only 264. Of these hundred there are, according to Ahmad Shah, only five which in a mutilated form can be safely attributed to Kabir. Poem 69 of the translation is the only one which occurs in both the *Bijak* and the *Granth,* and even this is only an extract from the poem as it is in those collections. Ahmad Shah considers that in the whole collection of Kshiti Mohan Sen there are only 18 poems and 39 *sakhis* which bear any resemblance to the poems in the *Bijak.* In some of the poems there are lines or phrases here and there which come from the *Bijak,* but the remainder of the collection is, he thinks, by some author or authors unknown, of times more modern than Kabir.

The poems indeed are very beautiful, and as we might expect from the skilled hand of Rabindranath Tagore, are very fine also in their English dress; but he maintains that they cannot be regarded, except in fragments here and there, as the genuine work of Kabir. With regard to the use of the name of Kabir in these poems, we have to remember that the name of Nanak was used in all the compositions of the gurus in the Sikh *Granth* down to Guru Arjun. The use of the name of a great teacher in this way is not to be taken as forgery, but rather as showing respect; it is as much as to say, 'This is what the guru taught.' Ahmad Shah brings forward other considerations also, which suggest that these poems are not the work of Kabir himself. Some Persian words are used which are not found in Kabir's poems; some of the poems are in Panjabi and others contain Panjabi words. Moreover the Hindi is comparatively smooth and clear, as compared with the obscurity of much of Kabir's verse, and seems to belong to a later period. Apart form linguistic considerations, the ideas are often different from those which we generally find in Kabir. Consider for example the following (Kabir is the speaker):

> When He whose forms are manifold had not begun His play: When there was no Guru, and no disciple: when the world was not spread out: when the Supreme One was alone:—
>
> Then I became an ascetic: then, O Gorakh, my love was drawn to Brahma. Brahma did not hold the crown on his head: the god Vishnu was not anointed as king; the power of Siva was still unborn; when I was instructed in Yoga. I became suddenly revealed in Benares, and Ramananda illumined me. (Poem 29).

Would Kabir have written this?

Again, in Poem 42, Kabir is represented as saying that he has bathed at the holy bathing-places, and cried aloud to the images. And in another poem we read:

> Then I left off all rites and ceremonies, I bathed no more in the holy water.
> From that time forth I knew no more how to roll in the dust in obeisance. (Poem 65).

Such experiences as these seem to be quite contrary to what we know of Kabir's habits, as indicated in his recognized poems. In Poem 47, the poet says, 'I sing the glory of Kabir. In Poem 91, the author tells us he has learned the Sanskrit language; but even the legends which glorify Kabir admit that this was not one of his accomplishments.

Ahmad Shah concludes, then, that while these poems are the work of a poet, or poets, of a distinguished order, they are not the work of Kabir. Some passages indeed are true to his teaching, and contain genuine quotations from him; but the collection as a whole is the work of others. Some of them may have been composed by Sikh gurus. Some may have been the work of a Sufi, for Sufi ideas are to be found in them. The origin and development of this collection may have been similar to that suggested above for the *Bijak* and the *Granth*.

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ADDENDA

Page 5. In the Qoran, Sura Mariam, the infant Jesus is represented as addressing those who were perplexed as to the nature of his birth, saying "Verily, I am the servant of God etc." See *Studies in the Qoran* by Rev. Ahmad Shah, p. 106.

Page 11. A short account of Mansur Al Halraz (the cotton carder) and Shams Tahrezi, together with extracts from the latter's writings, will be found in *The Persian Mystics,* Wisdom of the East Series, Murray.

Page 25. Balakh in north Afghanistan was the birth-place of Jalal-ud-din Rumi, the author of the *Masnawi.* It is for Sufis a place of pilgrimage. Kabir is said to have visited Balakh. The name also occurs in the title of two Kabir writings, *Balakh* and *Balakh ki Ramaini.*

Page 28. The following Sakhi (187) occurs in the Bijak: I neither touched ink nor paper, nor did I take a pen into my hand; to the sages of all four ages Kabir declared his word by mouth.

CORRIGENDA

Page 11. ll. 2. and 30. *For* Tahrezi *read* Tabrezi.
Page 15. l. 19. *For* Chishit *read* Chishiti.
Page 16. l. 31. *For* Bhura *read* Budha.
Page 19. l. 17. *For* Khanti *read* Khanthi.
Page 24. note 3, l. 2. *For* Nidan *read* Nidhan.
Page 26. ll. 34 and 35. *For* Akardi *read* Aqardi, *and for* Tujawar *read* Mujawar.
Page 48. ll. 25. 26. *For* Saguna *read* Sarguna.
Pags 50. l. 20. *For* Radhi *read* Radha.
Page 94. l. 10. *For* Nidan *read* Nidhan.
Page 89. l. 34. *For* Tariqa *read* Tariqat.